WAYS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

K 33
B 98

OLD SPIRITUALITY
FOR MODERN MEN

By
DOM CUTHBERT BUTLER
MONK OF DOWNSIDE ABBEY

JDV Library, Pune
1859
248 BUT/W

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.
55 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
1932

PERMISSU SUPERIORUM O.S.B.
NIHIL OBSTAT: GEORGIUS D. SMITH, S.TH.D., PH.D.
CENSOR DEPUTATUS
IMPRIMATUR: ✠ JOSEPHUS BUTT
VIC. GEN.
WESTMONASTERII, DIE XXIA APRILIS, MCMXXXII

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY THE WHITEFRIARS PRESS, LTD.
LONDON & TONBRIDGE

1859

FOREWORD

A WORD of explanation of the title of this book is needed. In fullest reality there is only One Way of Christian Life, the following of Him Who said : I AM THE WAY.

But there are divers ways, divers paths, in the following of our Lord. Manifestly the way in which the Carmelite nun or the Poor Clare follows Him is not the same as the way of the Sister of Charity ; nor the way of the pastoral priest the same as the way of the married layman. Yet by one way or another of Christian life all have to follow Christ. Those kept in view in this book are the great population of the Kingdom of God on Earth, the multitude of men and women of good will : those who are striving to know, love, and serve God by living their busy lives in the world in His sight, faithfully carrying out the duties of their states of life, and thereby doing God's Will in their regard ; who say their morning and night prayers, hear Mass on the Sundays, approach the Sacraments perhaps weekly, perhaps monthly, be it hoped ; but owing to their conditions of life and work, are unable ordinarily to do much more in the way of directly religious exercises—who could not

reasonably be asked to make a set meditation daily. And the special idea that prompted the writing of this book was to bring out the kind of guidance, of spiritual food, offered, not to their own members, but to such as these by the Older Orders. Because, not only in modern times, but at all times, in the early and mediæval times, has Holy Mother Church held out to all the means and helps of sanctification, and this largely through the ministry of her Religious Orders. And so it seems that the spiritual food on which good Christian men and women were nurtured during a thousand years before the sixteenth century, must still have its efficacy and its power for the formation of the Christian character.

Thus, though enlargements have been made, the original idea of this book was to bring out what four Old Orders—Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite—had to hold out, and still have, of religious food and formation for good people in the world. The Franciscan, Dominican, and Carmelite chapters have been submitted to well-known members of these Orders.

A word must be said, to forestall criticisms likely to be made.

It may be said that a book entitled 'Ways of Christian Life' ought to have a chapter 'Jesuits,' setting forth the Way of St. Ignatius in the 'Exercises,' probably in these our days the best known of all the Ways. It is, however, to be noted that the

title of the book has 'Ways,' *not* 'The Ways.' And the very fact of St. Ignatius's Way being so widely known was a sufficient reason for leaving it out. It is expounded in numberless books of Sons of St. Ignatius; and for any outsider not trained in the 'Exercises' to venture on an exposition of them, would be indeed an impertinence.

A more valid question will be: What of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, one of the Old Orders? Of the Victorines and Thomas à Kempis? The case was considered. Hugh and Richard of St. Victor have a place of their own in the development of the theory of the spiritual life and in mystical theology; but it is due to their having applied to these subjects the then nascent scholastic method of treatment, so that their contribution was on the speculative side, and was versed for the most part in the higher regions of contemplation and mystical theology; thus their teaching is not directly serviceable for the sort of good souls in whose interests this book is written. When we consider these, the outstanding contribution of the Canons Regular is the *Imitation of Christ*. In spite of difficulties that are real on the side of internal criticism, the external evidence in support of the claim of Thomas à Kempis as the author, seems to me overwhelming: I have tried to bring this out in the article 'Imitation of Christ' in the eleventh edition of *Encyclopædia Britannica*. This wonderful little book, though written by one leading what may

well be called a monastic life, and for those leading the same life, is for all that so universal and so compelling in its religious appeal, that the claim is often made for it that next to the Bible it has wielded the most powerful influence on the religion of Western Europe, not only Catholic, but also Protestant. Though an account of the *Imitation* would have been in place here, still it seemed that an elaborate analysis of a single book and statement of its teaching would be out of proportion to the treatment of the rest of the materials. And so to those who still desiderate a presentation of Canon Regular spirituality, may simply be said : ' Read the *Imitation !* '

Manifestly many books have been used in the making of this one ; they will be met in the course of reading. Only two works covering in general the subject-matter need be named here :

Abbé P. Pourrat, *Spiritualité Chrétienne* (English translation, Burns, Oates and Washbourne) ; Abbé F. Vernet, *Spiritualité Mediévale* (English translation, *Medieval Spirituality*, Sands & Co.).

Both are excellent works of synthesis and will be consulted with profit by any whose interest in the Older Spirituality may be aroused by these pages.

I am indebted to the following for permission to quote from the books named :—

Messrs. Thomas Baker, the *Life* of St. Teresa, *The Living Flame of Love* and *The Dark Night of the Soul*, by St. John of the Cross ; Messrs. Burns, Oates and

Washbourne Ltd., *Christian Spirituality*, by the Abbé P. Pourrat, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, by Fray Francisco de Osuna, *A Map of Prayer*, by Fr. R. H. J. Steuart, S.J., *The Dialogue of the Seraphic Virgin Catherine of Siena*, translated by Algar Thorold, *The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi*, by Hilarin Felder, O.F.M.Cap., *Oratory of the Faithful Soul*, by Blosius, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, and books in the 'Library of St. Francis de Sales'; Messrs. Constable & Co. Ltd., my own *Western Mysticism*; Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., *St. Catherine of Siena as seen in her Letters*, by Miss Scudder, *The Writings of St. Francis*, by Mgr. Paschal Robinson; Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., *The Life of St. Francis* and *The Romanticism of St. Francis*, by Fr. Cuthbert, O.S.F.C.; Messrs. Methuen & Co. Ltd., *Devotions of St. Anselm*, edited by C. C. J. Webb in the 'Library of Devotion'; Messrs. Sands & Co., *Treatise on the Love of God*, by St. Francis de Sales, *Medieval Spirituality*, by the Abbé Vernet; the Abbess of Stanbrook, *The Interior Castle* and *Letters* of St. Teresa. Also to the Proprietors of the *Clergy Review* for permission to use my article on 'Prayer' (March, 1931), here incorporated on pp. 184–191, also pp. 254–6.

CUTHBERT BUTLER,
Ealing Priory,
London, W.5.

23 April, 1932.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	BENEDICTINES	1
	THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF THE RULE	5
	EARLY BENEDICTINE SPIRITUAL WRITERS: ST. ANSELM: ST. BERNARD: ST. GERTRUDE	11
	ABBOT BLOSIUS	28
	FR. BAKER: RECENT ENGLISH WRITERS	34
	CONFRATERS AND OBLATES	39
II.	FRANCISCANS	42
	ST. FRANCIS HIMSELF	43
	ST. FRANCIS'S 'LETTER TO ALL CHRISTIANS'	45
	EUCHARISTIC DEVOTION	48
	THE CHRISTMAS CRIB	53
	ST. BONAVENTURE	57
	FRANCISCAN WRITERS	64
	THE THIRD ORDER	69
III.	DOMINICANS	74
	ST. THOMAS	79
	ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA	89
	SPIRITUAL WRITERS	97
	THE ROSARY	103
	THE THIRD ORDER	106
IV.	CARMELITES	110
	ST. TERESA AND HER BROTHER	111
	ST. TERESA'S 'MANSIONS'	114
	ST. TERESA ON MEDITATION	121
	ST. TERESA ON CONFORMITY TO GOD'S WILL	128
	ST. TERESA ON LOVE OF ONE ANOTHER	132
	ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS	134
	SCAPULAR CONFRATERNITY	139
	ST. TERESA OF LISIEUX	140

PAGE

V. ST. FRANCIS OF SALES . . . 142
THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE 144
THE LITTLE VIRTUES 151
TREATISE ON THE LOVE OF GOD . . 154
LOVE OF BENEVOLENCE. . . . 161
THE LETTERS 168
ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL . . 173

VI. THE LITURGICAL REVIVAL . . 175
THE CALL OF THE POPES . . . 176
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRAYER. . . 180
VOCAL PRAYER 184
THE CANONICAL OFFICE . . . 187
THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS. . . 191
LITURGICAL WAY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE . 197
AN OBJECT LESSON 205

VII. CONTEMPLATION 211
CONTEMPLATION OPEN TO ALL . . 212
KINDS OF MENTAL PRAYER . . . 216
PRAYER OF LOVING ATTENTION . . 222
WHAT IS CONTEMPLATION? . . . 226
ACTIVE OR ACQUIRED CONTEMPLATION . 232
ORDINARY PRAYER 235
VOCAL PRAYER AND CONTEMPLATION . 237

VIII. GATHERING THE FRAGMENTS . 240
SELF-DISCIPLINE: ASCETICISM. . . 241
PERFECTION POSSIBLE IN ANY STATE OF LIFE 244
LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR 246
WORSHIP: PRAYER 247
KEEPING SUNDAY HOLY 249
MORNING AND NIGHT PRAYERS . . 252

WAYS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

I. BENEDICTINES

ST. BENEDICT wrote his Rule for monks, for men living in community, out of the world, in monasteries, under obedience to a superior, under regular discipline according to the Rule. It was for such as these that he intended to provide in the way of spiritual instruction and guidance; and he probably had no thought of becoming in any way guide or teacher in the spiritual life to men and women living in the world.

But just as, beyond any idea he could have had, his monks became the chief instruments in bringing the Gospel to the new Teutonic peoples of North-Western Europe and in effecting their conversion, and the chief workers in the long and slow process of Christianising and civilising the newly converted races, so similarly, as part of the instruction in Christian life and manners, the spiritual teaching and principles of the Rule gradually filtered through: so that not only in the order of Christian civilised social life, but also in the order of the spiritual life, St. Benedict was, in himself and through his monks,

during the long period of the Dark Ages, called also the Benedictine Centuries, from 600 to 1200, the chief teacher of the spiritual life for Western Europe; and the spiritual rivers that watered the deserts and made them bloom into the Ages of Faith, were chiefly those that flowed forth from the Benedictine houses, and had their source in St. Benedict's Rule.

And after the Benedictine Centuries had passed, and other Masters and Schools had come into the life of the Western Church, St. Benedict continued to work as a former of the spiritual life of the laity. For at all times, and more emphatically since the Reformation, his monks have taken up the work of education, so that in modern times great secondary schools are found in most Benedictine monasteries; and naturally the pupils of these Benedictine schools are imbued with and brought up in the traditions of the spiritual life that have been handed on in Benedictine circles from the beginning.

And so we may speak of a Benedictine School of the Spiritual Life as a fact. But it would not be correct to conceive of it as any particular systematised method of spiritual drill or manner of prayer. Just as there is no special Benedictine school of theology, and no special devotion to which Benedictines as such are pledged, so there is no special Benedictine spirituality. But there is a certain kind of spirituality that is the natural outcome of the Rule.

Before attempting to characterise this spirituality,

it will be well to place St. Benedict and the Rule in their historical setting.[1] St. Benedict was of Roman race, born in Central Italy about the year 480. About 500 he left Rome, determined to be a monk, and at first lived for three years in solitude, as a hermit, in the Cave at Subiaco, now called the Sacro Speco. On his becoming known, several came to him to be monks under his guidance, so that he formed twelve monasteries of twelve monks each in the vicinity of Subiaco. After some years he migrated with a group of monks to Monte Cassino, a mountain half-way between Rome and Naples. Here he established the famous monastery ever associated with his name, the centre of Benedictine life and spirit, one of the great sanctuaries of Christendom and fountain-heads of the spiritual and intellectual culture of Western Europe during many centuries. This may have been about 525; and about 550 he died. Thus his life was cast in one of the critical epochs of European history, the dawn of the Middle Ages, when the Teutonic and Slavonic tribes were swarming over Europe, and by their fusion with the old populations were beginning the process of transformation of the Roman Empire into the nations of Modern Europe. In the earlier stages of this transformation St. Benedict's Rule played a great part. His monks were the pioneers in

[1] Anyone desiring fuller knowledge of St. Benedict and his Rule and Institute may find it in my book *Benedictine Monachism* (Longmans). Or, more shortly, in the volume *Benedictines* by Dom David Knowles, in the 'Many Mansions' Series (Sheed and Ward).

the conversion of many of these pagan races—English, Frisians (Holland), Germans, Scandinavians, Wends, Prussians: the 'Apostle' of each of these was a Benedictine. And the monasteries planted among the newly converted peoples were the centres and schools from which were propagated those ideas of social order and the arts of peace, whereby was brought about the slow and painful process of making the still semi-barbarous tribes into a Christian people. How slow and painful was the process may be read in the pages of Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks* (translated by O. Dalton, Clarendon Press), where in the example of the Franks the idea is dissipated that a nation became Christian by being baptised: the forming of the Franks into a people living anything like what could be called a Christian life was the work of several generations. It illustrates words of Edmund Bishop, that the action of the Church in those dark ages that lay between the downfall of the ancient civilisation and the rise of the new, forms one of her fairest titles to the veneration and gratitude of mankind. And all this was in great measure the silent patient work of the Benedictine houses, not in Gaul, indeed, but in the rest of Northern Europe.

We may now consider the main elements of the spiritual teaching that the Benedictine Rule brought to bear on this great work of Christianisation and civilisation of the new races during the Dark Ages; and, we may add, which it still offers to the world to-day.

THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING OF THE RULE

Benedictine general teaching on the ordering of life and the disciplining of character may be set out thus :

According to the law of Nature, and according to the principles of Catholic social theology, as enunciated by Leo XIII in the famous encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, and very emphatically reasserted by Pope Pius XI, the Family is the social unit, first in order of thought and of fact ; and out of a number of families is built up the Tribe, the Nation, and the State. The family comes first ; and, speaking broadly, every human being normally grows up in a family ; and it is in the family, and by taking part in the family life, that each one's character is disciplined and formed, and the great family virtues acquired. Thus the family is the normal school ordained by God for the training of men and women in virtue ; and it is the exercising of the mutual family virtues of husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, that is the natural means intended by God for men to sanctify their souls and work out their salvation.

Now St. Benedict based the form of religious life he set up on this law of Nature. He made his community a family bound together by lifelong natural and supernatural family ties. The monks of each Benedictine monastery are bound together in a religious family by bonds binding for life ; and

normally they go through life together under the family roof-tree, in a community that belongs to its own monastic home. Thus each Benedictine community is a permanent social unit living its own family life according to the Gospel precepts and counsels. And it was by exhibiting in working such supernatural Christian family life that St. Benedict's monks brought not only the lessons of civilisation to the rude peoples of North-Western Europe, but also the exercise of virtue and spiritual formation, and the principles of the spiritual life of the Gospels, to all who came within the sphere of their influence.

As might be expected, St. Benedict lays down rules and principles for the conduct of the community life of his monks that are equally applicable and admirable for Christian family life in the world. These may be found principally in the 63rd and 72nd chapters of the Rule. A beautiful simple mutual courtesy is enjoined, according to St. Paul's 'in honour preferring one another.' The younger ones are to respect and honour the elder, the elders are to love the younger. The Abbot, as Father, all are to revere and to love with sincere and dutiful affection. Then such practical rules as these are given: 'let them with the utmost patience bear with one another's infirmities of body or of character and temperament'; 'let none pursue what he thinks useful to himself, but rather what is useful to another'; 'let no one follow the bent of his own heart'; 'let no one do to another

what he would not like done to himself'[1]—all golden rules for family life, the very foundation of the idea of the Christian family as the School of Christian life and character.

If we come to look in the Rule for indications of St. Benedict's own personal religion, his pieties, we find adumbrated the principal recognised practices of the spiritual and ascetical life. For instance, among the *Instruments of Good Works* (c. 4) we find, in a rudimentary form, such practices as daily examination of conscience: 'Daily to confess to God in prayer our past sins, and to amend them for the future'; 'Ever to keep guard on our actions'; also meditation on the Four Last Things: 'To keep death daily before our eyes; to fear the Day of Judgment; to hold Hell in fear; to desire life eternal with all spiritual longing'—all of course in a rudimentary way, without the systematised methods of later examinations of conscience and meditation.

In regard to private (*peculiaris*) prayer, St. Benedict says little—he thought there was little need of saying much. There is no trace of any method of prayer: methods had not been devised, nor prayer systematised. He thought it enough to say: 'If anyone desire to pray privately let him just go into the oratory and pray.' In two places he indicates his mind as to what such private personal prayer should be: c. 20:

[1] This negative form of Our Lord's Golden Rule is found elsewhere in early Christian writings.

'Not in much talking, but in purity of heart and compunction of tears.' c. 52: 'Not in a loud voice, but in tears and intentness of heart.' Such prayer is, as Bishop Ullathorne characterised it, 'contemplative and aspirative.'

But St. Benedict's emphasis was on the canonical office as the great daily common prayer of his monks; that is, vocal prayer, not mental,[1] and so more in touch with the ordinary everyday prayers of good Christian folk, for whom vocal prayer is the usual staple of their prayers. His general injunction is that we are to hold ourselves as in the presence of God and the angels, and to keep our mind in accord with our voice.

The *Instruments of Good Works* in the 4th chapter gives a list of spiritual maxims and exercises, most of them fully applicable and practical for all comers, and such as will be helpful in forming the ascetical or self-disciplinary side of the spiritual life. The one all-embracing mortification on which St. Benedict relies is the Renunciation of our own will, and the conforming our will to God's. This principle, we shall see, is common to all masters of the spiritual life as being the teaching of our Lord Himself.

There has been much discussion of late over a distinction drawn by Abbé Bremond in his great *Histoire du Sentiment religieux en France*, between kinds of spirituality which he designates as 'theocentric,' and

[1] See below, c. VI.

those that he calls 'anthropocentric'; the latter being spirituality that is primarily aimed at the betterment of the person, by eliminating faults and implanting and cultivating virtues: *i.e.*, the object of which is 'asceticism,' taken in its fullest and truest sense, as discipline and training. Theocentric spirituality is primarily centred on God and His worship and love. Of course, this is only looking at the same thing on different sides and aspects, and the two aspects cannot really be separated in any system of sound spirituality. Still the distinction does hold good, in that it represents a certain difference of approach, and a certain difference in the way of looking at things and of practice. Anthropocentric spirituality will be more introspective, more given to refined examination of conscience, to marking progress and failure, and to making definite resolutions as to conduct: in a word, more subjective.

Such distinctions entered little into St. Benedict's mind: but he does show himself to be of the theocentric way when he says his purpose is 'to set up a school of God's service' (Prologue), not 'a school of perfection,' which would be the more modern expression, the purpose of the religious life being defined, 'to aim at perfection,' a more individualistic conception.

But St. Benedict's own spirituality and piety may more rightly be called 'Christocentric,' for Jesus Christ is above all the central religious idea and motive

of the Rule. This I brought out in the *Medulla Doctrinae* or catechism of the Rule attached to my edition of the *Regula* (p. 168; ed. 2, p. 178), and in *Benedictine Monachism* (p. 57): The Rule begins with Christ, ever dwells on Christ, and ends with Him. The aspirant to the monastic life is welcomed at the outset as one going to serve as a soldier of Christ; the monk is by faith to see Christ in all, in the Abbot, in the guests, in the sick, in the poor (Matthew xxv); in self-denial he follows Christ; in obedience he imitates Him; by patience he shares in His sufferings; by love of Him will he come to perfect charity; he is to place nothing before the love of Christ, nor deem anything dearer to him than Christ; and the closing words are that he is to prefer nothing whatever to Christ.

Such was the spiritual food that St. Benedict had to offer to the Christian folk, and that was brought to them by his monks: evidently an old-world type, the spiritual lore of the Fathers of the Desert and the early monks. There is in it little that is emotional, little appeal to imagination and feeling: it is sober, austere, strangely unlike our modern devotional life. There is in the Rule no mention of the Blessed Virgin, nothing of the nature of 'devotions' to her, or to angels and saints. Festivities, 'natalicia,' of saints were kept, no doubt among them the primary feasts of the Blessed Virgin, as in the Gelasian sacramentary; and the saints' relics were in the church; angels are

spoken of, even Guardian Angels. But there is no suggestion of their cultus having place in personal devotional life, nor any cultus of the Blessed Sacrament. It would be an anachronism to look for these elements at the beginning of the sixth century.

EARLY BENEDICTINE SPIRITUAL WRITERS: ST. ANSELM

St. Gregory the Great was the first Benedictine writer on the spiritual life; he treats very fully of many of its aspects, and was the great spiritual master of the early Middle Ages. The same austere restrained character pervades his teaching. Unfortunately, he wrote no set treatise on the spiritual life, and his teaching has to be drawn from scattered pieces throughout his voluminous works. Mr. Dudden, in his *Life of St. Gregory*, pronounces the *Morals on Job* to be 'a veritable treasure-house of sixth century theology and ethics.' The Homilies on Ezechiel and the Gospels would be of special interest for our purpose, being sermons preached to the Faithful in the Lateran Basilica. In *Western Mysticism* a synthesis is made of St. Gregory's teaching on prayer, contemplation, and the contemplative and active lives; a similar synthesis and co-ordinated exposition of the ascetic side of his teaching, that concerned with Christian life and religious effort, would, I am convinced, be a luminous exhilarating Benedictine contribution, practical still in our day, to Christian ascetic and religious literature, of extra-

ordinary value to all, lay folk no less than priests and religious.

It is to be remembered that in those centuries books were few, and the lay folk who could read them fewer still. Religious instruction had to be by word of mouth, or through the eye. The simple prayers, the 'Pater,' 'Ave,' and 'Credo,' were taught and learned by heart in Latin or in the vernacular; also no doubt some of the psalms, enough to follow vespers on the Sunday. The church services and the feasts and functions of the liturgical cycle of the year, from Advent to Pentecost, were no doubt the chief means of bringing home to the illiterate populations the great Christian mysteries and truths, and of instructing them and stirring them to devotion and piety. The Sunday Mass was the centre of religious life. With St. Benedict the celebration of the canonical office was the staple of the spiritual life of the monks, and in the Benedictine houses all the liturgical functions of Mass and Office, and the special services of the various feasts, were carried out with much solemnity and splendour, certainly from the time of St. Benedict of Aniane, A.D. 800. And so was it universally, in cathedral and collegiate churches too, according to their means. Thus the spiritual formation of the mostly quite uneducated illiterate masses was derived chiefly from attendance at the church services on Sundays and Feasts. It followed that attention was centred on worship of

God, rather than on personal spiritual life; though the periodical reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist drove all inward to the ordering of their Christian life.

In this way things went on during the five centuries from 600 to 1100. Not but that there arose in this period Benedictine spiritual writers: St. Gregory has been spoken of; others were Ambrose Autpert in the eighth century, who wrote *The Conflict between Virtues and Vices;* Alcuin, if not a Benedictine, at any rate was imbued with the spirit of the time, and made a book of devotions for lay people: and others.[1]

Finally, St. Anselm (born 1033, monk at Bec 1060, abbot 1078, Archbishop of Canterbury 1093, died 1109). He broke new ground, not only in the domain of theology, where he is hailed as the Father of Scholasticism, but also in the domain of personal devotional life. Besides theological treatises he composed Meditations and Prayers. The Meditations are not of the kind now understood by that name. They are theological in inspiration and tone, but are suffused through and through with a warmth of personal piety that makes them outpourings of soul and heart to God, and they are chiefly centred on the person of the divine Redeemer, the thought of guilt and redemption being ever uppermost. They are in their nature affective prayer, and would not be suitable for meditation or mental prayer as now under-

[1] Named by Vernet in *Medieval Spirituality*.

stood; but they could well be used as fervent vocal prayers, like the acts in the prayer books, or for thoughtful prayerful reading in times of quiet reflection. St. Anselm's Introduction says:

> The meditations and prayers, since they are published in order to rouse the reader to the love or fear of God or to self-examination, are not to be read in the midst of turmoil, but in stillness, not quickly but slowly with close and serious consideration. Nor ought the reader to be careful to read through the whole of any one among them, but so much as he perceives may do him good in kindling within him the desire of prayer. Nor need he begin any one of them always at the beginning, but wherever shall best please him.[1]

So used these Meditations and Prayers will be found to provide warm affective prayer in a theological setting, that will prove helpful to all who may use them. At various times translations of selections from them into English have been made: not to speak of older ones, a volume of translation was published at Oxford in 1856 with an Introduction by Pusey; and in 1903 a dainty pocket volume appeared in Methuen's *Library of Devotion*, containing selections made and translated by Professor Clement Webb, which is greatly to be recommended as one of the best and most characteristic of Benedictine

[1] Webb's translation (see below), p. 54.

contributions to the spiritual life of all comers at all times.

Pourrat, in his *Spiritualité Chrétienne*, gives a number of specimens of St. Anselm's devotions: one short one must suffice here:

> Make me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, to taste by love that which I taste by knowledge; to perceive by affection what I perceive by understanding. Draw me, O Lord, into Thy love, even this whole self of mine. All that I am is Thine by creation, make it to be all Thine by love. Behold, O Lord, my heart is before Thee; it striveth, but of itself it cannot do what it would; do Thou do that which of itself it cannot do. Cleave thou unto Him, cleave unto Him right earnestly, O my soul! O good Lord, cast her not away. She is sick with hunger for Thy love, do Thou cherish her.[1]

ST. BERNARD

The one, however, who stands out as the populariser of Benedictine spirituality, who developed and adapted it for men and women of all degrees at all times, was St. Bernard (1090–1153). He was a Cistercian; but great as was, and is, the difference in external life between Cistercians and Black Benedictines, in the theory and practice of the spiritual life there is little or none. Abbé Pourrat looks on St.

[1] Webb's translation, p. 118.

Bernard as the inaugurator, creator, of the devotional life of the later Middle Ages, and even of Catholic piety in modern times.

St. Bernard lived at the dividing line between the two Ages, the Patristic and the Scholastic. He was the child of the older, now passing away, the 'last of the Fathers.' The new Age was already dawning in the early twelfth century, the Age of the scholastic philosophy and theology, the Universities, the Friars, the Crusades, ushering in the glorious thirteenth century. The Benedictines in handing over the educative formation of the new Age to others, bequeathed a legacy, which was in effect the initiation, the first conception, of the great intellectual movements of the future. Newman wrote :

> The period properly Benedictine ended; this honour being shown by Providence to the Order from which it is named, in reward for its long and patient services to religion, that, though its monks were not to be immediately employed by the Church in the special sense in which they had been her ministers for some hundreds of years, still they should be the first to point out, and that they should hansel, those new weapons which Orders of a different genius were destined to wield against a new description of opponents.[1]

Lanfranc and St. Anselm at Bec had initiated the

scholastic method ; as Bishop Hedley puts it : ' When the *Monologium* and *Proslogium* of St. Anselm appeared Scholasticism was upon the world.' [1] Gratian, who made the first codification of the Canon Law, was a Benedictine. The great ' Glossa ' on the Bible, which became the text-book of medieval exegesis, was a product of the Benedictine schools. Thus of the great fundamental works of the twelfth century, which were the starting points of the movements of the thirteenth, the *Book of Sentences* of Peter Lombard alone was outside of the legacy bequeathed to the future by the Benedictines when on the point of making way for others to take their place as the educators of the Western world. And, to come to our subject, it was the Cistercian St. Bernard who opened out to the Christian people of the West the wells of piety that have become perennial fountains of Catholic devotional life.

We shall not be concerned with St. Bernard's teaching on mysticism and contemplation and heights of prayer and of religious experience : all that subject has been dealt with in the book *Western Mysticism*.[2]

On the side of devotional life Abbé Pourrat takes St. Bernard as the outstanding representative of what he calls ' The Benedictine School of Spirituality,' and

[1] Vol. of Essays *Evolution and Faith* (Sheed & Ward), Introd., p. xxxii. Prof. Webb has given a translation of the *Proslogium* in the vol. just spoken of.

[2] See also *The Mysticism of St. Bernard*, by Watkin Williams (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1931).

he gives a hundred pages to St. Bernard's teaching on the spiritual life, illustrating each point by well chosen extracts. One desirous of appreciating this rich inheritance of St. Bernard cannot be better advised than to turn to these pages of Pourrat.[1] He characterises the Benedictine spirituality, and pre-eminently St. Bernard's, as 'affective piety.' It was in no way speculative, in no way touched by the scholastic movement, already beginning to run its course in St. Bernard's great contemporaries, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor. There is no trace in him of the Neoplatonism that colours so greatly St. Augustine's teaching; nor of the ps.-Dionysian writings already coming into vogue in the West. St. Bernard's spirituality was simply and solely religious, pure piety, fixed above all on the contemplation of our Lord Jesus Christ as Man. Our Lord had been the object of devotion of the older saints and fathers from St. Paul downwards—of St. Benedict, as we have seen. But St. Bernard dwelt on the sacred Humanity in a way that was all his own, thus opening up the floodgates to the great waves of devotion to Jesus Christ as Man that flowed so strongly and characterised so markedly the religion of the later Middle Ages, and of modern times. Dean Inge well says: 'His great achievement was to recall devout and loving contemplation to the image

[1] Pourrat's *Spiritualité Chrétienne* has been translated into English (Burns, Oates and Washbourne); see Vol. II.

of the crucified Christ' (*Christian Mysticism*, p. 140). Not that such image of our Lord and of His Cross had ever ceased to be the central object of worship and devotion: but St. Bernard was able from the depths of his loving and devout nature, and by his gifts of true inspired poetry and rare eloquence in ardent moving oratory, to impart to it a warmth and a colour it had not before. It may be said he in a way humanised the idea of our Lord and made it appeal to mind and heart as never before. And so he concentrated chiefly on the scenes of our Lord's Life, mostly in the Sermons on the Seasons of the Church's Year—Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost. They were preached to his monks, probably in Latin as we have them; but they soon were turned into various vernaculars of the time, and were widely circulated and thus reached the Faithful. They dwelt on our Lord's Birth in the Stable, the Circumcision, the Adoration of Shepherds and Magi, the Childhood, scenes from the Public Life, the Passion and Crucifixion, the Resurrection and Ascension. Though setting forth the mysteries in a way that was new, all coloured by Bernard's tender exuberant piety, the sermons were not pictorial representations, not 'compositions of place'; Bernard did not attempt to draw for the imagination realistic pictures of the Infant in the Crib, or of the Saviour agonising on the Cross, as became the fashion with later preachers. He speaks, indeed,

with loving sympathy, of the tears and cries of the Infant—tears shed, he says, not for pains, but for the sins of mankind; but he dwells rather on the virtues to be seen in our Lord, His humility, His obedience, His patience, above all, His love, as shown forth in the different episodes. The thought is Scriptural, and the language is throughout highly coloured by Scripture. The Sermons are indeed almost a mosaic of Scripture texts and turns of expression. In the editions only the formal citations are in italics; if all the casual citations and refrains were italicised, near half the text would be italic. In this way the phases of our Lord's Life, His Passion and Crucifixion and Resurrection, are laid before us, and their religious lessons brought out with incomparable power and beauty, in a way calculated to stir up faith, devotion, love in the hearts and minds of all. There is no space here to illustrate all this, as Abbé Pourrat does so well; a single specimen must suffice—the exquisite piece on the Holy Name of Jesus, from Sermon XV on the Canticle of Solomon. It will be familiar to priests, being the Breviary lesson of the Feast, but probably new to others:

> *Thy Name is Oil poured out!* For oil gives light, nourishes, anoints. It feeds fire, it nourishes flesh, it soothes pain. Light, Food, Medicine. See the like now in the Name of Jesus: it gives light when preached, it nourishes when thought of, when invoked it soothes and anoints. Let us go

through each. Whence, thinkest thou, was there in the whole world so great and so sudden a light of faith, except from the preaching of the Name of Jesus? Has not God in the light of this name called us to His wondrous light? [elaborated in detail].

Nor is the Name of Jesus light only; it is also food. Are you not strengthened as often as you remember it? What so fattens the mind that thinks of it? What so well repairs worn out faculties, strengthens virtues, invigorates good and upright morals, nourishes chaste affections? Every food of the soul is dry unless it be moistened with this oil; it is insipid if it be not seasoned with this salt. If you write, it has no savour for me unless I read there Jesus; if you dispute or confer, it has no savour for me unless Jesus sounds there. Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, jubilee in the heart.

His Name is also medicine. Is any one of us sad? Let Jesus come into his heart and leap thence to his mouth. Lo, at the sound of His Name there is calm, all clouds are cleared, serenity returns. Does anyone fall into crime? Does he run in desperation to the snare of death? Will he not, if he calls on the Name of Life, straightway breathe again unto life?

Next, it is well recognised that to St. Bernard is due a great development and vogue given to the

popular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Of course, as is well known, devotion to her, even in exuberant expression, was in full use in the East from an early date, St. Ephrem Syrus being the great example. Such devotion can be traced also in the West, and not merely in the sober theological terms of an Ambrose and an Augustine,[1] but with an Oriental fervour, especially in Spain in the seventh century.[2] In England, too, traces can be found. In the English book of prayers in use in the eighth century, contained in the Cambridge University Library MS. known as the *Book of Cerne*, are found prayers 'to Holy Mary,' in which she is hailed as '*salvatrix et adiutrix*' with our Lord Jesus Christ; also '*interpellatrix, illuminatrix, adiutrix*': 'We have confidence and know for certain that thou canst obtain whatever thou wishest from thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.'[3] And no doubt similar expressions of devotion may be found in the rest of Western Europe in those early times.

But there is no doubt that a great impetus and a new tone and fervour were imparted to the current cultus of the Blessed Virgin by St. Bernard's fervid piety and eloquence, which became the starting point of the popular exuberance and abandon of later

[1] On this subject articles by Dom Ambrose Agius in the *Downside Review*, 1919, 1926, 1932, may be referred to. The final one, on St. Ambrose and the B. Virgin, will come to many as a surprise.

[2] Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, 'Spanish Symptoms'; also p. 161.

[3] *The Book of Cerne* (Cambridge University Press), p. 154.

Western piety. Pourrat again makes a good selection of pieces illustrative of St. Bernard's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. To him it seems is due the favourite familiar Catholic title 'Our Lady,' '*Domina Nostra.*' And the familiar terms of our devotion to Mary to-day are found in St. Bernard: she is our Advocate; the Mediatrix through whom we can most surely approach her Son; the Dispensatrix of grace—the idea that all graces come to us through her, as did our Lord Himself, is clearly foreshadowed, and even asserted, by St. Bernard: when we prepare to offer anything to God, we should entrust it to Mary to present it for us, for whatever is offered to God by her hands is sure to be accepted.[1]

In short, with St. Bernard we are in the full current of medieval and modern Catholic piety to Our Lady: he has been well called her Knight and her Troubadour. The sermon on the Name of Mary, to be found in the Breviary for the Feast, September 12, will afford a pleasing specimen of the devotion he propagated.

> 'And the Virgin's name was Mary,' which is interpreted Star of the Sea, and is most suitably given to the Virgin Mary. O whosoever thou art who seest thyself tossed rather among the waves and winds of the torrent of this world, than walking

[1] Pourrat points out that the prayer 'Memorare' was not actually composed by St. Bernard, but may be paralleled, even built up, from his writings.

on firm land, turn not thy eyes from the gleam of this Star, if thou wish not to be sunk in the waves. If the blasts of temptation arise, if thou art dashed on the rocks of tribulations, look on the Star, call on Mary. If thou are tossed on the waves of pride, of ambition, of detraction, of envy, look on the Star, call on Mary. In dangers or troubles think of Mary, call on Mary. Let her not depart from thy mouth, let her not depart from thy heart; and that thou mayest obtain the suffrages of her prayers, do not neglect the example of her life. Following her thou wilt not go astray; beseeching her thou wilt not despair; thinking of her thou wilt not err; if she hold thee thou wilt not fall; if she protect thee thou wilt not fear; if she lead thee thou wilt not faint; if she favour thee thou wilt arrive safely home, and so wilt thou experience in thyself how rightly it was said: And the Virgin's name was Mary.

Another popular Catholic devotion, that to the Guardian Angel, was greatly preached and popularised by St. Bernard; and he seems to have been the first to preach St. Joseph, enlarging on the dignity of his position and his personal qualifications of holiness.

And so all later generations of the Faithful owe in the first place to the Benedictine tradition, in the person of St. Bernard, that strong Christocentric character of worship of the Sacred Humanity of our

Lord and loving contemplation of the Mysteries of His Life, that is the heart and soul of Catholic religion and piety; also the fervent child-like devotion to His Holy Mother, 'Our Lady'; and the widespread devotion to Angel Guardians and to St. Joseph: among the most distinctive elements of our modern Catholic religious life.

Along with St. Bernard should be mentioned his close friend and first biographer, William of St. Thierry, Abbot of the Cluniac abbey of that name near Rheims, and author of notable spiritual works.[1] Though more definitely addressed to monks, these works exercised a great influence over the general spiritual teaching of the Middle Ages, an influence carried forward into later times. The most generally attractive of his works is that entitled *Meditative Prayers*, called by Dom Berlière 'a pearl of twelfth century asceticism.' It still awaits a translator. Not so the *Golden Epistle*, now definitely restored to William. It has recently been put into English, enriched with a long and useful Introduction by Dom Justin McCann,[2] which discusses a few passages that have given rise to questionings. Though written to a community of Carthusians, much of the principles laid down is of general spiritual application. It was early and for long attributed to St. Bernard himself, and was a favourite with such doctors as St. Bona-

[1] Migne, Patr. Lat. clxxx.

[2] *The Golden Epistle of Abbot William of St. Thierry to the Carthusians of Mont Dieu* (Sheed & Ward).

venture, Ruysbroeck, Gerson; while St. Aloysius Gonzaga's biographer says that he knew it nearly by heart. As a contribution to the higher mystical theology the epistle has its value: Vernet pronounces William as, next to St. Bernard, 'the most attractive spiritual writer of the Benedictine Order during the Middle Ages. He has learning, devotion, and unction'; the *Golden Epistle* is 'one of the most important books of medieval spirituality.'[1]

ST. GERTRUDE

A word in passing must be spoken of the three Cistercian nuns who a century later than St. Bernard lived in the convent of Helfta, Saxony—St. Gertrude and the two Mechtilds. Though their writings are for the most part revelations and pitched in the heights of mysticism, in one aspect they are the forerunners of one of the chief devotions of our modern Catholic life, the cultus of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

There has long been current a book of prayers called *Prayers of St. Gertrude*. A monk of Solesmes, Dom Caste, has recently shown that this collection is unauthentic, and in 1926 he produced a critical edition of her authentic prayers. A translation has been published by Messrs. Sheed and Ward, a small book, *True Prayers of St. Gertrude and St. Mechtild.* The editor points out that in them the life of devotion is chiefly the consideration of the Passion and Death

[1] *Medieval Spirituality*, p. 21.

of the divine Redeemer and Lover; its framework is the liturgy, of which the centre is the Mass, and the culmination Holy Communion. Such a combination of Christocentric devotion in a liturgical setting is very characteristic Benedictine spirituality. But the reason St. Gertrude is brought in here is the emphasis she gives to devotion to the Heart of Jesus. The 'True Prayers' open with the first morning exercise on rising:

> Greet the Heart of Jesus: When you first rise turn to the rich and loving Heart of your most sweet Lover: 'I praise, I bless, I glorify Thy sweetest kindest Heart, O Jesus Christ, my most true Lover.' Again:
>
> 'See Lord; here is my heart withdrawn from every created thing; with the whole of my will I offer it to Thee, praying Thee to adorn it gloriously in the precious Blood of Thy sweetest Heart. Make it accord perfectly with Thee in the sweet fragrance of Thy divine love.'

Thus the Sacred Heart runs through these prayers colouring all Gertrude's devotion; so that she, and in her the Benedictine spirituality, may claim to have inaugurated in the Church that great Catholic devotion that has been becoming ever more and more prominent in modern times, and is now probably the most widespread and popular of Catholic devotions. Any who may like to sample the larger works or

treatises of SS. Gertrude and Mechtild will find a selection of picked passages in the work of Abbot Blosius, *Monile Spirituale*, or *String of Spiritual Jewels*, being Vol. V of the set of his works, to be spoken of presently. The 'Jewels' are from the writings and revelations of four virgin Saints, Gertrude, Mechtild, Bridget of Sweden, Catherine of Siena.

ABBOT BLOSIUS

I refrain from rehearsing the names of a number of Benedictine spiritual writers to be found in Pourrat and Vernet, the purpose being, not to give a history of the old schools, but to bring out their contributions to the spiritual life of the Faithful. Therefore I skip two centuries, and come to him who is probably the best known Benedictine spiritual writer, Louis de Blois, commonly known as Blosius. His books are probably the most widely known of all Benedictine spiritual books, and have done more than any others to propagate and popularise the Benedictine kind of spirituality. Blosius was born in 1506 near Liège, of a noble family, and at an early age entered the Benedictine Abbey of Liessies in Hainault, where even before ordination he was elected Abbot, 1530; he died 1566.[1] He produced a number of spiritual works, recognised as among the standard works on the spiritual life;

[1] A life of Blosius was published in 1875 by Lady Lovat, *A Benedictine of the Sixteenth Century*.

some definitely addressed to monks and religious, others of more general appeal, dedicated to 'all men of good will.' It is these latter that have spread through wide circles the principles and the practice of Benedictine spirituality. Blosius' works, written in Latin, have been translated many times into the principal languages. The late well-known Dominican, Fr. Bertrand Wilberforce, was a great lover of Blosius and made English translations of his principal works. His translations, supplemented by others, have recently been brought out in a set of seven handy volumes by Burns, Oates and Washbourne, under the general editorship of Dom Roger Hudleston of Downside Abbey, and to this edition all references are made.

Those of his works probably the best known are intended for monks or religious: *The Mirror for Monks*, and the most famous of all, *The Book of Spiritual Instruction*, which is a treatise on mystical theology. Of general appeal, addressed to 'Men of good will,' are the three treatises: *Comfort for the Faint-hearted* (Vol. II), *The Spiritual Mirror* (Vol. I), *Rule (or Canon) of the Spiritual Life* (Vol. VI).

The most popular of these works, and perhaps the most characteristic, is the *Comfort for the Faint-hearted*. The author explains:

> This book has been written for the comfort of men of good will, who, although they may formerly

> have sinned grievously, or even now offend often every day from human weakness, still have a determination to amend their lives by the help of God's grace, and desire and strive to advance in a good and holy life. . . . By men of good will we mean those who abstain from all deliberate sin and are trying to live according to the spirit, in order that they may please God.

It is a golden book that has brought comfort and courage to many a distressed and even despairing soul, one of the very best products of Benedictine temperament. True, the comfort is often administered in selected extracts from the author's favourite spiritual writers, especially the two famous German Dominican mystics of the fourteenth century, Suso and Tauler. It has already been laid down that a fundamental characteristic of Benedictine spirituality is that it is 'affective,' not intellectual, little concerned with speculative or scholastic theorisings on the nature of the spiritual life and prayer. Blosius' spirituality continues in essence and in practice to be true to this affective tradition; but he was familiar also with the speculative and scholastic sides of mystical theology that came into vogue with the thirteenth century; and in the definitely mystical portions of his writings, as in *The Book of Spiritual Instruction*, he came under the influence of the ps.-Dionysiac writings, and that of such mystics as Ruysbroeck, Suso, and Tauler, all saturated with the

ideas of ps.-Dionysius. But in spite of such later intellectual element, Blosius remains in substance a true representative of the Benedictine School in the affective non-intellectual kind of piety he offers to all comers of good will. *The Rule of the Spiritual Life* (Vol. VI) was the earliest of Blosius' writings, *c.* 1537; *The Spiritual Mirror* (Vol. IV) was twenty years later. Both are admirable practical manuals of spiritual instruction suited for good lay folk serving God in the world. Each in different ways covers the whole range of the spiritual life—the disciplining of character overcoming sin, cultivating virtue, exercising prayer. High ideals are held out, and he is no soft director. The Dominican editor of these two works in the recent series signalises as Blosius' outstanding characteristics, 'sturdy common sense, wholesome piety, quiet gentleness, never-failing kindliness, serene wisdom, sane cheerfulness'—the marks, we would fain hope, of his Benedictine spiritual school.

But the most characteristic and the most helpful of Blosius' contributions are the specimens and aids to prayer. These are found chiefly in the *Oratory of the Faithful Soul* (latter half of Vol. VII). They are two sets of 'Conversations with Jesus.' The prayers of the first set are based on the chief facts of our Lord's Life and Passion. They afford such good and perfect models of the kind of 'affective prayer' that is characteristic of the Benedictine and other old schools of spirituality, that a sample will be given here, and

the Adoration of the Magi may be taken. All begin with the same invocation :

Hail, sweet Jesus, praise and honour and glory be to Thee, O Christ !

Whom the wise men sought for in holy faith, and found by the guiding of a star ; and having found Thee, fell down and worshipped, offering Thee gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh :

Grant, O Lord, that with these blessed men, I may always seek for Thee,
and worship Thee in spirit and in truth,
and that I may ever offer Thee the gold of burning love
the frankincense of fragrant devotion
the myrrh of perfect mortification.

Give me grace to spend the whole strength of my soul in praising and worshipping Thee,
according to Thy holy will.

All these exercises are on the same structure—

the opening invocation :
then in the briefest way a picture or thought of one of the facts of our Lord's Life or Passion : this I suppose might be called a very rudimentary ' composition of place ' :

then a succession of devout acts, affections, petitions, suggested by the consideration and arising out of it such acts and petitions being the body of the prayer.

There are just a hundred of these exercises, and they are arranged for the mornings and evenings of the days of the week. But it is hardly possible that Blosius intended them to be used simply as vocal prayers, to be read right through each day; and it would be a mistake so to use them. After a brief thought or realisation of the subject or picture proposed, we should pass on to the acts and petitions, one by one, dwelling on each for as long as soul and heart find in it 'gust' (to use Fr. Baker's quaint word) or relish, repeating the same act over and over till its efficacy wanes; then passing on to the next act. Used in this way each exercise might well fill up a half-hour of affective mental prayer for two or three days, and the entire body of exercises be spread out over a year.[1]

The other set of Conversations with Jesus and with Mary, which follow the former, are more ejaculatory, 'springing upward at random, like sparks from a furnace, from the heart on fire with the love of God.' Such affective prayers and loving colloquies or conversations with our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, are Blosius' most characteristic and helpful contribution to the spiritual life of the Faithful as offered by the Benedictine School. Such prayers abound also in other parts of his works, as in *Mirror for Monks*, c. iv, and elsewhere. It will be observed that in his medita-

[1] These 'Hail, sweet Jesus' exercises have been reproduced by Fr. Baker (see next section).

tions there is no formal 'method,' no division into 'points.' A great outpouring of piety and love to our Lord or His Blessed Mother is the outstanding feature of Blosius' devotion.

FR. BAKER: RECENT ENGLISH WRITERS

Fr. Augustine Baker, the chief English Benedictine spiritual writer, carried on these devotions of Blosius. Appended to *Sancta Sophia* are 'Certain Patterns of Devout Exercises of Immediate Acts and Affections of the Will,' and Blosius' Conversations 'Hail, sweet Jesus,' hold the first and largest place among them. They are somewhat rearranged and are broken up more distinctly into separate acts. A still further abridged form of the 'Patterns' is given in the little booklet edited by the late Fr. Collins, O. Cist., under the title *Devotions of Dame Gertrude More*.[1] And a handy well-printed little volume, *Acts and Affections for Mental Prayer*, edited by the late Dom Benedict Weld Blundell and published by Sands & Co. only the other day, contains a revision and adaptation to modern use of Fr. Baker's 'Patterns,' both 'Hail, sweet Jesus' and the rest. This little book is greatly to be recommended to souls desiring material and help for the exercise of the prayer of affections and acts, Fr. Baker's own instructions being

[1] It had long been supposed that the collection of 'Patterns' was made by Fr. Baker's chief disciple, Dame Gertrude More, and adopted by Fr. Baker. Dom Justin McCann has shown that the collection was made by Fr. Baker himself.

prefixed on the manner in which the acts are to be used.[1]

Fr. Baker wrote primarily for contemplatives: yet what he says on the second stage of prayer, affective prayer of the will, is serviceable and suitable for all, especially those who, through lack of time, or through temperament and mentality, or, Fr. Baker would add (and with him St. John of the Cross), through progress in interior prayer, are unable to make formal meditations. The chapters 'Variety of Acts,' 'Acts of Resignation,' and the earlier chapters on Sensible Devotion and Aridity or Dryness in Prayer, and Distractions[2]: all good souls of what kind or degree soever, who try seriously in any measure to practise prayer, will find all this most helpful. It is worth noticing that in a quite recent number of the *Clergy Review* (December, 1931) a very competent judge pronounces *Sancta Sophia* to be 'the sanest of all spiritual books.'

This is in no sense a history of Benedictine spirituality, and so it would be out of place to name the various Benedictine spiritual writers and appraise their teaching: it is an effort to present the thing objectively, the kind of spirituality that stands out as

[1] Fr. Weld Blundell has published a similar volume, *Self-Discipline and Holiness*, being 'the Teaching of Fr. Baker thereon from *Sancta Sophia*' (Methuen), which will be no less helpful.

[2] See pages 431–456, and 365–383 in the 1876 edition of *Sancta Sophia*. This edition has been reprinted many times, with same pagination, but with title changed to *Holy Wisdom*. A somewhat modernised abridgement has been made by Dom B. Weld Blundell, called *Contemplative Prayer*.

that which those formed in St. Benedict's 'School of Service of God', on his Rule, have offered to the world, to men of good will striving to love and serve God in their busy lives in the world. So, writing for English-speaking lands, I will conclude with a mention of two recent Benedictines who have written for the great world.

Bishop Hedley's *Retreat* is well known, it has gone through a number of editions. It is profoundly Benedictine in tone: the meditations are 'considerations' of the old type rather than methodical meditations, and they are interspersed with ejaculatory affective prayers—acts rather than examinations and resolutions, though they probe very deep. Though a retreat, the book is very suitable at all times for spiritual reading and religious reflection. And the essay 'Prayer and Contemplation,' a study of *Sancta Sophia*, in the recent volume of reprinted Essays, *Evolution and Faith*,[1] contains matter bearing on the more theoretical side of Benedictine spirituality. This recent presentation by a master, of what Benedictine spirituality has to offer to the modern world will be found as attractive as it is stimulating.

The late Abbot Columba Marmion was an Irish secular priest, a professor of theology, who became a Benedictine in the Belgian abbey of Maredsous, and eventually became Abbot. He was a trained theologian, and a biblical scholar in the sense that he knew

[1] Sheed and Ward.

the Bible well, especially St. Paul; and he had a good working knowledge of the great Fathers and spiritual writers. Thus equipped, and endowed with a genuine personal piety and a fervent Irish eloquence, he became a noted giver of retreats and conferences; towards the end of his life these conferences were brought together in four volumes, and at once enjoyed a quite extraordinary welcome. Being delivered in Belgium, they were French, and edition after edition of the French books were exhausted; they were translated, too, into all the languages, English included. Two of the volumes are addressed to religious; but two are intended for all: *Christ the Life of the Soul*, and *Christ in His Mysteries*. They owe their popularity no doubt to a combination of qualities not often found together: a theological and biblical treatment, made persuasive by eloquence and unction, and brought home to the hearer or reader by a very personal appeal. The author's Benedictine soul shows itself in the strong Christocentric teaching, wholly concentrated on Jesus Christ; and in the objective, institutional, liturgical framework in which it is set—Church, Sacraments, Sacramentals, social Christian life, all being stressed as factors of personal religion. These works may be recommended as the latest flowers of the old tree of Benedictine spirituality for men of good will.

In sum it may be said that the Benedictine spiritu-

ality in all its manifestations and developments has remained true to the great central ideas derived from St. Benedict himself and developed by St. Bernard and others: viz., its Christocentric outlook on the Humanity of our divine Lord, and its character of affective piety and prayer, concerned less with workings of intellect and imagination than with those of will and affections.

It may be matter of surprise that in the foregoing pages no account has been taken of the Benedictine's 'Opus Dei,' the canonical Office, rightly looked on as the principal element and characteristic of traditional Benedictine spirituality. But these pages are not intended for monks; they are intended for good lay folk in the world; and, whatever may have been the case in former times, such do not now say the Office, or even the Little Office of our Lady, and could not reasonably be urged to do so. So that it would have been beside the mark to bring out the distinctive liturgical character of full Benedictine spiritual formation. I will be pardoned if in conclusion I cite a few lines from the section 'The Benedictine Spirit' in Fr. Faber's *All for Jesus*:

> The failure of a regimental kind of holiness comes entirely from the want of liberty of spirit. No one can be at all acquainted with the old-fashioned Benedictine school of spiritual writers without perceiving and admiring the beautiful liberty of spirit which pervades and possesses their

whole mind. It is just what we should expect from an Order of such matured traditions. . . . A spirit of breadth, a spirit of liberty, that is the Catholic spirit; and it was eminently the badge of the old Benedictine ascetics. Modern writers for the most part have tightened things, and have lost by it, instead of gaining.

And he illustrates what he means by liberty of spirit from St. Gertrude in pages that would repay perusal.

CONFRATERS AND OBLATES

In conclusion a word will be in place concerning Benedictine Confraters, and Oblates, lay men and women in the world, associated by bonds of good will and prayer with Benedictine Monasteries. From very early times, from the ninth century and earlier, it was customary for lay people of every degree to be enrolled in the fraternities attached to the abbeys; and all through the Middle Ages such fraternities existed in connection with the great abbeys in every country of Europe, and pre-eminently in England. Fraternity implied for the confrater no rule of life, no obligation of special prayers, no organisation: it was simply an association for mutual help and prayer. The confrater undertook to promote the interests of the community, and often was a benefactor; the monks prayed daily for all in the Book of Fraternity, in which were inscribed the names of all confraters, living and dead,

and which was placed on the altar every day at the principal Mass. An interesting account of the institute as it worked in medieval times was given by Edmund Bishop in an article 'Confraternity Books,' in the *Downside Review*, reprinted in the volume *Liturgica Historica*. In recent times the old loose idea of confraters has been reorganised, but under the name of Oblates and on the lines of the Tertiaries of the Franciscans, to be spoken of anon. This was done at the beginning of the present century by Leo XIII. and Pius X. The idea of Oblates is practically the same as that of Tertiaries; and as the working and idea of the Franciscan Third Order is explained at the close of the next chapter, there is no need to anticipate it here. But though the Benedictine Oblates are said in the decree to bear to the Monastic Order a relation analogous to that borne by Tertiaries to their respective Orders, they are not to be called Tertiaries, because St. Benedict wrote only one Rule, and there is no Benedictine Third Order. But in matter of practices, rule of life, obligations, ideas, the Benedictine Oblates differ little from Tertiaries.

They are, however, attached to particular monasteries, not to the Order in general; and as is natural, the idea of the liturgy is emphasised in the pious practices laid upon them; for instance, they are recommended to say Prime and Complin, in English if so be, for morning and night prayers. There is a formal reception, with investing of small black

scapular to be worn always; a year of probation; and then the oblation with promise, which is in no sense a vow, and may be recalled. A general rule of life is proposed, and numerous indulgences may be gained—all just as with the Tertiaries of the Third Orders.

In England there are differences in practice. The Abbeys of the old English Congregation have clung in general, though with differences in detail, to the old looser type of confraters, and they have fraternities attached to them. There are fully organised Oblate institutes in connection with the monasteries of the modern Congregations, at Buckfast, at Farnborough, at Prinknash. Oblates' manuals have been published by Buckfast and Prinknash, the latter being much fuller and more satisfactory. Those attracted to the Tertiary idea, but under Benedictine auspices, have thus their opportunity of satisfying their pious desire.

II. FRANCISCANS

THE Friars appeared on the scene at the beginning of the thirteenth century, just after 1200, when the Benedictines had already for six centuries been next to the Catholic Church herself, whose ministers and instruments they were, the chief religious and civilising force in Western Christendom. As has been said, the monks, after the first work of evangelisation of the new Teutonic and Slavonic races had been done, carried on the slow difficult work of turning them into Christian peoples, not by personal appeal, but by exhibiting in their houses the silent object lesson of well-ordered, civilised, industrious life in organised communities, and the example of a religious family life according to the Gospel teaching. Thus their spiritual influence filtered through to the Christian men and women living and working in the world, rather than came as direct personal lessons and preaching, at any rate after the work of evangelisation was over.

Not so the Friars. They went forth and spoke directly to men and women in the world; but, Franciscans and Dominicans to different kinds of men, and in different ways. And first the Franciscans.

The story of St. Francis and his companions is one of the most attractive in all history, and it has been sympathetically and beautifully told by Fr. Cuthbert, the well-known Capuchin Friar, in his *Life of St. Francis*, the best, on the whole, yet written. It has been told also attractively, but with less real understanding, by Paul Sabatier in his famous *Vie de St. François:* for how could a modern liberalistic French Protestant, whatever his enthusiasm, really understand a hero steeped and soaked in medieval Catholicism! [1]

ST. FRANCIS HIMSELF

It would be out of place to attempt any account of St. Francis and the early Friars: it is only their message to the world and their preaching that concerns us. Accounts of this are to be found in Fr. Cuthbert's *St. Francis* (see Index, 'Francis, preaching'), and in more detail in Fr. Felder's *Ideals of St. Francis* (cc. XIV, XV, XVI).

At first Francis and his companions went about as lay preachers, merely addressing those they met on the road, in the fields, in towns, with the Gospel salutation, 'Peace be with you.' This pleading for Peace was always a special note of their message, very timely in view of the perpetual wars between

[1] For summary accounts of St. Francis and the Franciscans in history the following small volumes are recommended: *The Franciscans*, by Fr. James, O.S.F.C., in the 'Many Mansions' series (Sheed and Ward); *The Franciscan Order*, by Fr. Dominic Devas, O.F.M. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne).

the Italian cities, as Assisi and Perugia, and civil strife between the rival political factions in each city, such that all Italy was seething in a chronic state of wars and feuds. Often Francis and his Friars intervened directly to promote peace, and this preaching of 'Peace' ever continued the keynote of his sermons. When he first sent forth his Friars, two and two, to carry abroad the Gospel message, it was still as laymen, and their preaching was but an exhortation to the simplest elements of Christian life: they were to preach peace, and repentance and penance, and love of God, and the keeping His law.

But when Francis and the first Twelve went to Rome, 1209, and secured from Pope Innocent III the approval of their confraternity and Rule, the Pope gave them the tonsure, thus making them clerics, and gave them a general authority to preach throughout the world; thus they became, those of them designated by Francis, official preachers, commissioned by the Holy See to preach anywhere. They now began to preach in churches, and St. Francis preached in the Cathedral of Assisi. The effect of such earnest simple homely heartfelt preaching of the most fundamental religious truths was magical. Crowds flocked to listen, and were deeply moved—moved to amend their ways, restore ill-gotten goods, and lead good Christian lives. Some fragments of these sermons are preserved (see Fr. Cuthbert, *Life*, pp. 96 ff.); and in the Rule of 1221, § 21, Francis included a sample of

the sort of exhortation the Friars should give in their preaching : [1]

> Of the Praise and Exhortation which all the Brothers may make.
>
> This or the like exhortation and praise all the Brothers may announce with the blessing of God, whenever it may please them, among whatever men they may be : Fear and honour, praise and bless God, give thanks and adore the Lord God Almighty in Trinity and Unity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the Creator of all. ' Do penance, and bring forth fruits worthy of penance,' for you know that soon we must die. ' Give and it shall be given to you : Forgive and you shall be forgiven.' And if you do not forgive men their sins, the Lord will not forgive you your sins. Confess all your sins. Blessed are they who shall die in penitence, for they shall be in the kingdom of heaven. Woe to those who do not die in penitence, for they shall be the children of the Devil, whose works they do, and they shall go into eternal fire. Beware, and abstain from all evil ; persevere in good until the end.

ST. FRANCIS'S ' LETTER TO ALL CHRISTIANS '

But the Franciscan message to the world at large may best be seen in the Letter St. Francis wrote ' to

[1] *Writings of St. Francis*, Fr. (now Archbishop) Paschal Robinson, O.F.M. (Dent), p. 54.

all Christians, clerics or laics, men or women, to all who dwell in the whole world,' exhorting them to lead more Christian lives. An analysis is given by Fr. Cuthbert, *Life*, pp. 275–8: the salient points of practice are picked out here:

> He urges the reception of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist: Since the Divine Word offered Himself on the Cross a Sacrifice for us, it is the Father's will that all of us be saved through Him, and that we receive Him with a pure heart and chaste body. But few are they who wish to receive Him and be saved by Him, although His yoke is sweet and His burden light. They who will not taste how sweet the Lord is, and love darkness more than the light; who will not fulfil the commandments of God, they are accursed. But O how happy and blessed are they who love the Lord and do as the Lord Himself says in the Gospels: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and thy neighbour as thyself. Let us therefore love God and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind, because He Himself, seeking this above all things, says: 'The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth.' For all who adore Him must adore Him in the spirit of truth. And let us say to Him praises and prayers both day and night, saying: Our Father who art in heaven; because we ought always to pray and not to faint.

We must confess all our sins to a priest and receive from him the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us bring forth fruits worthy of penance; and let us love our neighbours as ourselves; but if anyone will not, or cannot, love his neighbour as himself, at least let him bring upon them no evil, but rather let him do them good. Let us have charity and humility, and let us give alms, because these wash the soul from the foulness of sin. We must also fast; and abstain from vices and sins and from superfluity of food and drink; and be Catholics. We must too visit churches frequently and reverence the clergy, not so much because of themselves if they be sinners, but because of their ministry of the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And let us all know for certain that no man can be saved except by the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the holy words of the Lord which the clergy say and announce and administer, and which they alone and no others must administer.

We must never desire to be set above others, but to be servants and subject to every human creature for God's sake (I Peter ii, 13, Vulg.). And all who shall do in this manner and persevere therein, upon them the Spirit of the Lord shall rest, and He will make in them His dwelling place and they shall be children of our heavenly Father, whose works they do: and they shall be the spouses, brethren

and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are His spouses when the faithful soul is united with Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost. We are His brethren when we do the will of His Father who is in heaven. We are His mothers when we bear Him in our heart and our body by love and a pure and sincere conscience, and bring Him forth in holy deeds which must shine as an example to others. O how glorious and holy and great it is to have a Father in heaven! O how holy, fair and lovable it is to have a Spouse in heaven! O how holy and delightful, pleasing and humble, peaceful and sweet, amiable and above all things desirable it is to have such a Brother who laid down His life for His sheep, and prayed to the Father for us, saying: Holy Father, keep in My name them whom Thou hast given Me.

It concludes:

And all, both men and women, who shall receive these things kindly, and understand, and send them to others for an example, if they persevere in them unto the end, may the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost bless them. Amen.[1]

EUCHARISTIC DEVOTION

We notice here at the outset the exhortation to the reception of Holy Communion, striking in a day when

[1] The whole Letter is well worth reading: it is in Archbishop Robinson's *Writings of St. Francis*, pp. 98–108.

the approach to Holy Communion even by good people was infrequent. His reiterated urging of Holy Communion, and of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, both in securing seemly physical conditions of Reservation and in promoting personal devotion, stands out as perhaps the most conspicuous feature of St. Francis's appeal to the Christian and Catholic conscience of his contemporaries. This aspect of his preaching is brought out by Fr. Felder in *Ideals of St. Francis*.[1] The following pieces in illustration are selected.

The 'Words of Holy Admonition' to his brethren open with an instruction on 'The Lord's Body': [2]

> All those who behold the Sacrament of the Body of Christ, which is sanctified by the Word of the Lord upon the altar by the hands of the priest in the form of bread and wine, and who do not see and believe according to the spirit and divinity, that it is really the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, are condemned, He the Most High having declared it when He said: 'This is My Body and Blood of the New Testament.' . . . Wherefore, O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart! Behold, daily He humbles Himself, as when from His royal throne He came into the womb of the Virgin; daily He Himself comes to us with like humility; daily He descends

[1] Chapter III: 'Francis and the Eucharist.'
[2] *Writings of St. Francis*, p. 6.

from the bosom of His Father upon the altar in the hands of the priest. And as He appeared in true flesh to the holy apostles, so now He shows Himself to us in the sacred Bread; and as they by their fleshly eyes saw only His flesh, yet with their spiritual eyes believed Him to be God, so we seeing bread and wine with bodily eyes, see and firmly believe it to be His most holy Body and true and living Blood. And in this way our Lord is ever with His faithful.

To his Friars who were priests he gave a burning exhortation:[1]

Consider your dignity, and be holy because He Himself is holy. It is a great shame and a deplorable weakness when you have Him present at Mass to care for anything else in the whole world. Let the entire man be seized with fear; let the whole world tremble; let heaven exult when Christ, the Son of the living God, is on the altar in the hands of the priest. O admirable sublimity and stupendous condescension! that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under a morsel of bread. Consider, brothers, the humility of God, and pour out your hearts before Him. Do not keep back anything for yourselves, that He may receive you entirely, who gives Himself up entirely to you.

[1] *Writings of St. Francis*, p. 112.

In the face of such passages, and there are other such, it is manifest that devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was one of the mainsprings of Francis's own personal devotional life: Sabatier recognises that 'the Eucharistic cult was to a certain extent the soul of his piety.' And it was contagious; he urged it on his Friars with an insistence that made them the bearers of a great Eucharistic message to the world. It was not merely a call to a revival of ancient piety in a time of decadence; it was something new. Great devotion there was in the Middle Ages in the West to the Mass; and good people prepared themselves with extreme care for the reception of Holy Communion on the rare occasions on which, according to the practice of the time, they approached the Holy Table—*e.g.*, St. Louis six times in the year. But what seems strange to us is the apparent absence of Eucharistic devotion—devotion to the Reserved Sacrament—as one of the elements of personal spiritual life and piety. On this Vernet says: 'The ideas and practice of the Middle Ages in regard to the Eucharist present one of the most difficult problems of history.' [1]

As an instance: In the case of St. Gregory the Great, no one can doubt the reality of his full belief in the Real Presence, or his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament: his Sacramentary stands out as a monument of his faith and his zeal for liturgical worship

[1] *Medieval Spirituality*, p. 96.

of the Blessed Sacrament and the public Eucharistic celebration. But in his great work, the *Morals on Job*, which is in large measure an exposition of the principles of the spiritual life, the Holy Eucharist appears hardly at all, if at all, as an object of personal devotional life. It is an almost disconcerting contrast to the spiritual books to which for long ages now we have been used, wherein the Holy Eucharist in itself, as the Reserved Sacrament, is one of the very central objects alike of our public worship and of our private devotional life. St. Gregory's silence is to us almost incredible. And what is to us a more strange thing still: surely we should have looked to St. Bernard, with his flow of tender devotion to our Lord's Person, to expatiate on the devotional aspects of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. But no! if we turn to the copious Index of the Maurist edition and look out the words 'Eucharistia,' 'Communio,' we find, it may be said, nothing; and in the sermon on Maundy Thursday the reference to the Holy Eucharist is incidental, of only a dozen lines.[1] Thus it seems that, at a time when the public liturgical worship of the Eucharist and the solemn celebration of Masses was carried out in all cathedrals, monasteries, and collegiate churches with a frequency and a solemnity unparalleled in later times, yet up to the end of the twelfth century the private devotional cult of the

[1] Similarly, the elaborate Index to the 'Oxford Library' translation of St. Gregory's *Morals* has but a single reference under 'Eucharist,' and the passage itself is only two lines of the text.

Blessed Sacrament as part of the personal spiritual life of the Faithful had not found place in the religious consciousness. And so, when we find that a change appears in Western Christendom towards the middle of the thirteenth century, a great wave of Eucharistic devotion and piety then beginning to flow, and when we recollect St. Francis's Eucharistic propaganda, we can hardly be mistaken in looking on him and his Friars as the first heralds of the movement that more than aught else has given increasingly its most special character to all subsequent Catholic piety and spiritual life.

THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

There is another thing which Catholic piety to this day owes to St. Francis, the Christmas Crib. Before him there was a Christmas devotion to the Divine Child, but it was liturgical in character: the figure was placed on the altar, not in the manger, crowned and robed as the Child-King; the idea was akin to the figure of Christ on the Cross, clothed in royal robes and with kingly crown, 'reigning from the tree'—'regnavit a ligno.' Our present more or less realistic presentation of the Crucifixion is to the earlier liturgical Christ reigning from the Cross, as our realistic Christmas Crib is to the liturgical figure of the Royal Infant. Our realistic Crib we owe to St. Francis. The story is so characteristic and so beautiful as to deserve a place in this account of the debt of

Catholic piety to St. Francis. It is told from the original sources by Fr. Cuthbert : [1]

One day at Greccio a few days before Christmas Francis said to a friend :

> I would make a memorial of that Child who was born at Bethlehem, and in some sort behold with bodily eyes the hardships of His infant state, how He lay in a manger on the hay, with the ox and the ass standing by. If you will, we will celebrate this festival at Greccio, and do you go before and prepare as I tell you.

And so in the wood near the hermitage a stable was built with a manger, and near the manger an altar. On Christmas Eve, when the hour for the Midnight Mass came, all the people from round about flocked to the hermitage carrying lighted torches. Francis was deacon at the Mass, and after the Gospel he preached. The earliest biographer thus describes it :

> He preached to the people who stood around, and uttered mellifluous words concerning the birth of the Poor King and the little town of Bethlehem. And often when he would name Christ Jesus, aglow with exceeding love, he would call Him the Child of Bethlehem ; and uttering the word 'Bethlehem' in the manner of a sheep bleating, he filled his mouth with the sound, but even more his whole self with the sweet affection.

[1] *Life of St. Francis*, p. 330 ; *Romanticism of St. Francis*, p. 177.

> Moreover, in naming 'the Child of Bethlehem' or 'Jesus,' he would as it were lick his lips, relishing with happy palate and swallowing the sweetness of that word.

Such was the first Christmas Crib that is now the universal Catholic devotion.

I will be pardoned for using Fr. Cuthbert's words describing the effect of the early Franciscan preaching on the Christian men of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries :[1]

> To the Franciscan Friars, more than to any other, must be attributed the achievement of bringing to the mass of the people the new fervour of religious devotion which already in the twelfth century was renovating the life of the cloister and introducing into liturgical worship a new dramatic beauty and warmth of feeling.
>
> The Friars were in fact the purveyors of this new piety to the multitude ; they brought it out of the cloisters and the cathedrals into the homes of the people and into the life of the world at large ; and for this, if for nothing else, the Christian world owes them a generous gratitude. In a sense this was their greatest historical achievement and that which left its most permanent impression upon the Catholic mind in all subsequent time.
>
> Two things conduced to the popularity of the

[1] 'The Story of the Friars,' in *Romanticism of St. Francis*, p. 175.

> Franciscan preachers: they invested the truths of religion with a language the people easily understood; and they showed in their preaching an intimate knowledge of the actual life of the people. . . . And they not only knew the details of common life; they entered with sympathy into the feelings of the people and understood their spiritual needs, and in their Catholic spirit did not hesitate to come out into the street and the market-place with those spiritual wares which it was their mission to bring to the multitudes. Thus they were in a particular sense the creators of popular devotional services, as distinct from the liturgical services of the Church.

They made prayers in the vernacular before or after the sermon, and so the popular service was a 'mission service,' with vernacular hymns. The Crib and the Way of the Cross are of this Franciscan origin.

Fr. Cuthbert's whole dozen pages are well worth reading, as a glowing but convincing picture of the Franciscan contribution to the religion of the world.

The Franciscan influence on men and women in the world is best seen in the institute of the Third Order, in some aspects St. Francis's most original creation. The account of it is, however, held over until after the characteristic Franciscan contribution to the science of the spiritual life and prayer has been dwelt upon, chiefly in St. Bonaventure, but also in other Franciscan masters of the spiritual life.

ST. BONAVENTURE

When we come to treat of Franciscan teachers on the spiritual life, we have to concentrate on St. Bonaventure, the first and greatest Master of the Franciscan School. The work has fortunately been made relatively easy, thanks to the altogether admirable and exhaustive study of St. Bonaventure's spiritual doctrine made by an American Capuchin, Fr. Dunstan Dobbins, in the first published part of a work on Franciscan mysticism, a degree thesis crowned by Oxford University.[1]

St. Bonaventure was primarily a theologian, a scholastic, who had commented on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, and had taught in the Paris Schools. But, unlike his great contemporary, and we may say rival, St. Thomas, he stood aloof from the Aristotelian current then coming into vogue, and carried on the Platonic tradition as adapted by St. Augustine, and passed on also by the Victorines. And Bonaventure's outlook became the outlook of the Franciscan School, which looked back to him as its fountain head. As contrasted with St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure was less interested in speculative theology, in the perception of speculative Truth for its own sake, than in its effects in stirring up devotion and love.

[1] *Franciscan Mysticism*, a critical examination of the mystical theology of the Seraphic Doctor (New York): being No. 6 of the series of 'Franciscan Studies,' produced by American Franciscans—a series of the highest quality, dealing with characteristic features of the Franciscan School of theology and philosophy.

And whereas St. Thomas ranged the intellect as the highest of man's faculties and the chief means of union with God, St. Bonaventure gave the primacy to the will, and placed highest among the operations of the soul the loving acts of the will. Thus with St. Bonaventure, and after him with the whole Franciscan tradition, the spiritual life is primarily of the devotional affective order and a matter of love, the acts of the intellect being but preparatory and secondary.

When we come to examine and to sketch St. Bonaventure's teaching on the earlier stages of the spiritual life, we are confronted with a difficulty. The opuscula that have gone under his name are numerous: there is a French translation of his *Œuvres Spirituelles* in six volumes (Paris, 1854). The Franciscan editors of the great critical edition of his Opera, recently issued from Quarrachi, have ruled out as spurious at least three-quarters of the material of these six volumes.[1] Fr. Dobbins, after the Quarrachi editors, gives (p. 24) a

[1] It was, of course, the usual fate of the great Doctors to have fathered on them works not their own: conspicuous examples are St. Augustine and St. Bernard. But in the case of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas there was a quite special reason for the multiplication of 'suppositia.' One of the forms taken by the rivalry between the two great Orders of Friars in past times was to keep up a sort of neck and neck race between the two Doctors in the matter of Opuscula. Each Order made it a point of honour to keep its own champion ahead. Thus, did the Dominicans produce a new Opusculum for St. Thomas, the Franciscans would respond with two for St. Bonaventure. And so on! It thus came about that an abnormal number of spuria found place among the Opuscula of each Doctor; and the Dominican and Franciscan editors of the modern standard critical editions have been faced with the task of eliminating a large quantity of unauthentic material, in many cases restoring it to the rightful authors.

modest list of ten spiritual treatises. They have been published separately in a single small volume: *Decem opuscula ad theologiam mysticam spectantia* (Quarrachi, 1900). Of these, some are intended definitely for members of the Franciscan Order; some for priests; and some for all men and women of good will, whatever their lot in life.

For our purpose it will be enough to take these five:

1. *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum.*
2. *De Triplici Via*, or *Incendium Amoris.*
3. *Soliloquium.*
4. *De Quinque Festivitatibus Pueri Jesu.*
5. *Lignum Vitæ.*

All five are to be found in volumes I and III of the French translation.

Fr. Dobbin's book naturally deals mostly with the higher, definitely mystical, grades of the spiritual life: contemplation, union, and the mystical theology of pseudo-Dionysius. In view of current controversies (see 'Afterthoughts' in 2nd edition of *Western Mysticism*) it is of use to say that Fr. Dobbins shows convincingly that St. Bonaventure carried on the Western tradition—Augustine, Gregory the Great, Bernard [1]—that contemplation is open to all men of good will, no state or condition of life being debarred from it, it being the normal culmination of a Christian life of self-discipline and prayer seriously

[1] See *Western Mysticism*, section K under each name.

lived, and not the perquisite of any spiritually leisured class.

For beginners and those endeavouring to lead a good Christian life in the world Bonaventure has much good practical teaching to offer. Though he did not invent the standard threefold division of the spiritual life into the stages of the Purgative, the Illuminative, and the Unitive Ways, the germ of which may be discerned in Augustine, Cassian, and other early writers, he was the first apparently to lay emphasis on it and make it the framework of his exposition of the spiritual life.

The first stage is the Purgative, the process of cleansing the soul from sin and sinful habits, of combating and mortifying the vicious inclinations of the flesh, and exercising ourselves in self-denial: this is done by acts of repentance and penance, and by the realisation of guilt by means of meditation on sin and on the Four Last Things.

When the soul has by such exercises been purified from sin and its stains, and is fairly embarked on its good course of love and service of God, it enters on the Illuminative Way; and the light comes chiefly from the loving study of our Lord Jesus Christ, by devout meditation on the examples of His Life and Passion. This pious and loving consideration and assimilation of the lessons of our Lord's Sacred Humanity, carrying forward a stage St. Bernard's devotion, is the keystone of St. Bonaventure's con-

tribution to the Christian life, and it set the key-note of all subsequent Franciscan piety as preached to the laity, ever strongly Christocentric.

St. Bonaventure is always the scholastic theologian; but he stands out as the one who most conspicuously combines science with devotion, his theology being ever coloured by a rich infusion of piety, and his piety not running to emotionalism, but being ever based on sound theology. But he gives the first place to devotional piety, as a better thing than speculative thought on divine things. Thus in the Prologue to the *Itinerary of the Mind to God*, in reality a piece of theology, and placed by the Quarrachi editors among the 'Theologica,' he gives the warning, that in reading it the things that matter are not so much the intellectual lights, as unction, devotion, admiration, joy of heart, piety, charity, humility. The *Itinerary* is really addressed to such as have had some training in philosophy and theology, and without such training its thoughts will hardly be fully appreciated or assimilated. Its idea is to see the vestiges of God in Creation, ascending through the rising grades of created things, and through the most sublimated metaphysical concepts of the intellect, up to the idea of God, culminating in the mystical experience described by Dionysius. Fr. Dobbins points out that herein, as elsewhere, is manifested a love of nature and a joy in beautiful created things, that Bonaventure inherited from Francis himself, as

in the wonderful *Canticle of the Sun*, and which has been a characteristic mark of Franciscan piety through the ages, a contrast with some other types of spirituality.

Of the other above-mentioned treatises *The Threefold Way*, named also *The Conflagration of Love*, is a brief outline of the spiritual life. According to its title it is planned on the three stages, Purgative, Illuminative, Unitive. Meditation, or consideration, of course holds a principal place in the exercises of the first two, as it did with the earlier writers, as St Bernard. But a certain progress or development may be discerned. Though it is still quite informal, without the 'points' or other machinery of more modern methods of meditation, the idea that the faculties of the mind should be successively brought to bear upon the subject meditated on, is laid down by St. Bonaventure as an integral part of the meditation:

> In meditation the soul should apply to the subject all its faculties—reason, 'synteresis' (*i.e.*, moral sense or judgement), conscience, will: the reason puts a question; the moral sense gives an answer; the conscience draws a practical conclusion; the will makes a choice (*Itin.* I, iii).

The treatise on *The Threefold Way* and the three that follow on p. 59, St. Bonaventure declares are not intended for theologians or the learned, but for simple folk and all men of good will. The *Soliloquy*

and the *Five Festivals of Infant Jesus* are books of meditation, informal, at once theological and suffused with the most heartfelt loving devotion, affording affective reflections, most suitable for slow thoughtful pondering in a time of Retreat.

But to my mind the treatise that is the most beautiful and practically helpful of all is the *Lignum Vitæ*, 'Tree of Life.' It is a set of forty-eight short, simple, devout meditations or considerations on the various episodes of our Lord's Life and Passion. In the case of the very similar exercises of Blosius, that on the Adoration of the Magi was taken as a sample; so let us now take Bonaventure's meditation on the same mystery:

> The Lord being born in Bethlehem of Juda, a star appeared to three Magi in the East, and going before them it conducted them by its light up to the abode of this humble King. Take care not to withdraw yourself from the splendour of this star, which rises and goes before you, but rather become the inseparable companion of these holy kings; receive from the hand of the Jews the writing which gives testimony of Jesus Christ, and learn to avoid the crafty wickedness of Herod. With the gold, myrrh, and incense adore Jesus your King and give Him your homage, both to a Man and to God. United to the princes of the nations whom He was to call to the faith, offer your worship to this God humiliated and laid in swaddling clothes; confess

His Name and sound His praises, that warned in a dream not to follow the pride of Herod, you may return to your own country by following the footsteps of the humble Jesus.

I do not know; but it does seem to me that in these days of publication of attractive little books of devotions and meditations and prayers of all kinds, a singularly good and helpful volume might be made of a translation of these very beautiful and simple meditations of St. Bonaventure's 'Tree of Life,' breathing love of our Lord and exciting to imitation of Him; and were the *Soliloquy* added it would make a volume of the earliest and most authentic Franciscan spirituality, unsurpassed as a manual of piety for men of good will.

FRANCISCAN WRITERS

We have lingered thus long with Bonaventure because he was so penetrated with, and so faithfully interpreted, the very mind and spirit of St. Francis, that he became the fountain-head of the Franciscan tradition handed on by later writers of the School. Of the great mass of spiritual treatises carded out from his genuine works by the scholarship of the Quarrachi editors, not a few have been restored to their Franciscan authors; and of the rest that remains anonymous, the greater portion bears on it an unmistakable Franciscan stamp. Only one of these treatises need be spoken of here, the *Meditations on the Life of*

Jesus Christ, a lengthy work, filling 500 pages of Vol. I of the French *Œuvres Spirituelles* of St. Bonaventure. Long believed to be St. Bonaventure's own, it exercised a profound influence on the religion of the people during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The meditations are based on the Gospels, so far as the Gospels go; then on the apocryphal literature; and when that too fails, the author supplies from his own pious imagination scenes and discourses purely mythical, often of singular beauty, pathetic and touching, calculated to stir to the depths of the soul all its religious feeling. The work was a great success; it occasioned a number of similar Lives of our Lord, the best known being that of the Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony; scenes from it were represented in art, and were introduced into the Miracle Plays. It is through and through Franciscan in motif and treatment, and it owes its inspiration to St. Bonaventure.

Needless to say, the Blessed Virgin Mary plays a great part in these Meditations and is the object of a tender devotion which, taking its start from St. Bernard, ever waxed more and more exuberant and human in Franciscan hands during the Catholic Middle Ages. The most outstanding instance, nourishing Catholic piety from that day to this, is the exquisite sequence 'Stabat Mater' of the Franciscan poet, Jacopone da Todi. The addition to the 'Hail Mary' of the second half, 'Holy Mary, pray for us sinners,'

etc., and also the devotion of the 'Angelus' are due to Franciscan influence.[1] It should be recalled, further, that to Duns Scotus, the second great Franciscan theologian, and to the Franciscan theological School, we owe it that the way was paved for the definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin in 1854, of which doctrine the Franciscans had ever been the foremost defenders and propagators. When we think of the greatly enhanced popular devotion to Our Lady that is the outcome of this doctrine, when we think in particular of Lourdes, we can gauge the immense devotional debt the whole Catholic people owes to the Sons of St. Francis for their leading part in promoting the cult of Mary Immaculate.

In times of relaxation popular Franciscan preachers, as Antony of Padua, Bernardine of Siena, John Capistran, played a great part in renovating Christian life and piety by stirring emotional appeals to the dormant religious sense of the people, spreading far and wide with great effect the characteristic Franciscan type of devotion and piety. St. Bernardine in particular propagated and popularised the devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, in itself the first and most biblical of all devotions, and one that we have heard St. Bernard dwell on lovingly.[2]

[1] These facts are vouched for by Fr. Dominic Devas, O.F.M., in his excellent booklet, *The Franciscan Order*, p. 86. Would that he would expand it into the much-wanted popular 'History of the Franciscans.'

[2] There are selections of St. Bernardine's sermons: *Examples of San Bernardino*, by Ada Harrison (Gerald Howe).

Quite recently some Franciscan, mostly Capuchin, spiritual books have been published in English in popular form, but for the most part they lie outside the scope of these pages, dealing definitely with the higher mystical theology, being intended for religious, or for those giving themselves up very fully to the exercises of the spiritual life—more fully than is practicable for those living and working in careers in the world.

And so of more modern Franciscan spiritual books the only one to be spoken of here is the *Treatise on Prayer and Meditation* of St. Peter of Alcantara. It is taken on account of the authority of St. Peter himself, the friend and spiritual guide of St. Teresa; and on account of its having been made easily accessible in the English translation of Fr. D. Devas in the series of 'Orchard Books' of Burns, Oates and Washbourne (1926), a handy pocket volume.

The Dedication indicates that St. Peter intended the little treatise to be 'of service to all,' especially the poor. But it is to be feared that in this he was unduly optimistic. The specimen meditations he gives are excellent and would be suitable for a time of Retreat. But they are very long in themselves, and with the exercises going before the meditation and following it, they would take up a prolonged period of time: St. Peter says two hours. But such a stretch of mental prayer is more than is prescribed by the rule of any religious Order. Teresian Carmelites and others

have an hour morning and afternoon, but not two hours on end. Any such periods of prayer are entirely outside the possibilities of good men, even of priests, living and working in the world; and so this tractate is not practical for the purpose of this book. Part II, however, an instruction on devotion, on dryness and distraction in prayer, will be of practical use to everyone. The like may be said of the well-known little tract *Pax Animæ* of the Franciscan Bonilla, which Fr. Devas prints here as a sort of appendix. It is recommended by Fr. Baker in the chapter of *Sancta Sophia*, 'Tranquillity of the Soul,' which doubtless owes in part its inspiration to the Franciscan treatise.

It will be in place to mention also an important Franciscan work which has just appeared in English: *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* of Fray Francisco de Osuna, translated from the Spanish by a Benedictine of Stanbrook.[1] Osuna was a Franciscan friar of the early part of the sixteenth century, one of the Spanish Mystics rescued from oblivion, for England at any rate, by Professor Allison Peers. This treatise of his was St. Teresa's favourite spiritual book, the one that gave her her first ideas of the spiritual life, and her first encouragement to embark on her course of interior prayer, or 'recollection,' to use Osuna's word. In the Autobiography she speaks of her debt to Osuna, and her copy exists heavily underlined and noted. The book is very long and deals in great

[1] Burns, Oates and Washbourne.

measure with the high things of the Spirit; but not only with these. It may be said that it would be good reading for thoughtful laymen of a quiet studious habit. The teaching is distinctly catholic; it is a sort of 'general store' of spirituality, providing an assortment of wares. There is nothing mystical about a great deal of it. It provides instruction in humility and charity and other virtues, as well as advice on prayer. The reviewer in the *Month* (February, 1932), in commending the book highly, calls attention to one feature:

> What surprises one and most catches one's attention in this Spaniard of the early sixteenth century is his quite modern-seeming appreciation of the part that the body should have in the affairs of the spirit. . . . He devotes quite a space to homely counsels on the care of the body, even down to such details as 'keep your teeth clean.'

He concludes: 'The book is immensely worth reading.'

THE THIRD ORDER

But the principal means whereby the influence of St. Francis and his Friars has worked its way in the world at large has undoubtedly been the 'Third Order,' perhaps his most distinctive creation. It owed its origin to the sort of revivalist movement set going by the preaching of the early Friars. Numbers

of men and women were stirred up to the desire of imitating the life of the Friars, as far as was possible for those bound by the duties of their state of life in the world, without breaking away from home and family, from marriage, and from the occupations and works of their life. For such as these, who desired to lead what since St. Francis of Sales has been known as 'the devout life' in the world, St. Francis provided a Rule of Life composed in 1221, in collaboration (it seems) with his friend and counsellor Cardinal Ugolino (Gregory IX). This Rule, somewhat revised, was strongly confirmed in 1289 by Nicholas IV. It at once caught on in Central and Northern Italy, and rapidly spread to all the countries to which the Franciscans penetrated, and it became so popular that great numbers of men and women belonged to it, of all grades of society.[1]

The name given it by St. Francis was 'Order of Penance,' and the members were called 'Penitents.' It was, indeed, to our modern notions a penitential manner of life. A number of days of fasting and of abstinence from flesh meat, greatly in excess of those of the Church, were enjoined. The full canonical office of the breviary, or an office made up of an equivalent number of psalms, was to be said daily by

[1] The best English account of the Third Order is that given in three lectures by Fr. Oswald, O.S.F.C., delivered at the Oxford Franciscan Summer School, 1928 (Burns, Oates and Washbourne). I have also the *Franciscan Tertiary Manual* (Pantasaph, Holywell, 1930), containing the rules, devotions, and explanation of the spirit and working of the Third Order at the present day.

those able to read; illiterates should say a prescribed number of 'Paters' and 'Aves' for each of the hours. Simplicity in dress was enjoined; it should be of undyed woollen cloth, the limit of price per yard of each material being fixed. The carrying of arms was forbidden, and the use of oaths, except in court of law. A monthly meeting for Mass and devotions was to be attended; provision was made for collecting alms for poor members, for visiting the sick, and for funerals of members. And, in general, the practice of a good Christian life and the cultivation of the great Gospel virtues was promoted. The regulations, however taxing they may seem to us, were well adapted to the spirit of the age, which was one of strong religious revival; and the Institute, soon called the 'Third Order' and its members 'Tertiaries,' flourished exceedingly and quickly spread far and wide; powerfully influencing the religion of numberless men and women of every rank in the world, and becoming a leaven raising the tone of Christian life all around. The Third Order had its natural periods of growth and decadence and revival; but it has ever gone on in some sort until our own day.

It came, however, to be felt that the great rigour of the Rule in matter of days of abstinence and fasting, and the imposing on lay folk the recitation of the Office, however suitable in St. Francis's day, made the Third Order practically unworkable in modern conditions,

and had become an obstacle to the religious usefulness of the Institute, which could be carried on at all only by a method of wholesale dispensations. This had long been felt to be an unsatisfactory state of things and a source of weakness. And so, one of the early acts of Leo XIII, himself a Franciscan Tertiary for many priests are Tertiaries, was to make a thorough revision of the Rule, adapting it to present-day conditions, thus, by making it not too onerous in its obligations, throwing it open to all men of good will living in the world. And it was his desire and hope that all good lay Catholics should become Franciscan Tertiaries. The change was effected by a Constitution of 1883. This revised Rule is the spirituality, the spiritual food, which, in conformity with the mind of the great Pope, Franciscans now are offering to good laymen and women immersed in the works and duties of their state of life.

The extra days of abstinence beyond those of the Church are abolished, as also the extra days of fasting, all but two. For the canonical Office is substituted for lay Tertiaries twelve 'Paters,' 'Aves' and 'Glorias' daily. Monthly confession and communion is prescribed—in the original Rule it was but thrice yearly—and frequent, even daily, communion is urged, as also daily Mass, if possible. A certain sobriety in dress and conduct is expected; the rule of moderation according to each one's state is to be observed, all excess and luxury being eschewed. The

regulations of the primitive Rule are re-enacted in regard to the avoidance of dangerous occasions from immoral books, plays, dances, etc.; likewise those inculcating Christian charity in all its aspects. In short, Tertiaries are called on to lead good Christian Catholic lives, thus leavening society.

Leo's desire that all the Faithful might join up has not been fulfilled; but in response to his call there are now some three million Franciscan Tertiaries throughout the world. It must be apparent what a powerful uplifting instrument for good, for religion and morality, for society and the State, for the betterment of the world, is thus being wielded by the Friars of St. Francis: and this is the instrument through which the 'Poor Little Man of Assisi' chiefly speaks and works to-day for the great work to which [illegible] hand—the Christian Regeneration of the World.

III. DOMINICANS

THOSE who wish for a concise account of th character, spirit, mission of the Dominican Orde will find it all set out with knowledge and insight i the two small books, *The Dominicans* of Fr. Joh Baptist Reeves,[1] and *Saint Dominique, l'Idée, l'Homm et l'Œuvre* of Père Mandonnet.[2] Both works are o high quality. Originating at the same time as th Franciscans, and like them called into being to hel to meet the urgent religious crisis with which th Church in the West was faced at the opening of th thirteenth century, the Dominicans when compared with the Franciscans present at once general resemblances, but also notable differences. The Order of Preachers was, just as truly as the Friars Minor, the Founder's own creation, the offspring of the religious genius of one man. The Black Friars resembled the Grey in that they went forth as preachers to the wide world, preaching in the first line by example, in an imitation of the apostolic poverty and simplicity of Christ and the Apostles, a silent protest against the riches and all too prevalent immersion of the clergy

[1] In the 'Many Mansions' Series of Sheed & Ward, 1929, 120 pp.
[2] Liège, *La Pensée Catholique*, 1921, 180 pp. It deals with the Sain himself and the first century of the Order. Père Mandonnet is one o the outstanding Dominican writers of our day.

in worldly affairs; and secondly by earnest homely sermons in the open to men of every kind and degree.

The immediate cause that called the Preachers into being was the Albigensian heresy that had overspread the South of France. Pope Innocent III appointed Dominic the leader of a band of preachers who should travel over the infected countryside and endeavour to convert the heretics by sermons on the wayside, or by conferences and set discussions with the leaders; also by similar means to hold the Catholics firm in the Faith. This special mission to the Albigensian heretics did not last long: after a few years the Albigensian Crusade was launched, and the heresy extirpated by the practical extermination of the heretics. Not by way of palliation of the ruthless methods used, but by way of statement of fact, it is to be noted that those who know have long since ceased to claim the Albigenses as the first Protestants and forerunners of the Reformation: they were Manichæans who held an extreme Dualism, subversive alike of all Christianity and of Civil Society itself, preaching the essential evil of matter and of the human body, and even of marriage and the procreation of children. When this grave menace to Church and State, to the Christian religion and to Civil Society, had been, by whatever means, crushed out, Innocent's successor, Honorius III, impressed by the effects of their preaching and religious activities in the period before the military Crusade, determined that Dominic and his band of

volunteer preachers should not cease their work with the crisis that had called them forth, but that they should be given permanence by being formed into religious Order of Preachers, whose mission shou be to go forth into the whole world, instructing Catholic Faith and Catholic life all comers—Catholic heretics, pagans, high and low. And so, by dir act of the Pope, was formed the Dominican Ord the Order of Friars Preachers. This was in 121 and Dominic died in 1221. It is an extraordina fact that these five years sufficed for the establishmer organisation, and diffusion of the new Institute, that at his death St. Dominic left his Order in being firmly established, and well started on its career of service for the Church and for religion. Already priories had been founded in many of the great cities of Europe—Rome, Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Madrid; already the Order had been divided into eight Provinces; already the recruitment was phenomenal, alike in the number and the calibre of those that flocked in.

And now, established in the great cities, the Domi nicans turned themselves to the instruction and th religious needs of the Catholic populations of t cities of Western Europe. In this way they we setting themselves to the same work as the Fra ciscans, preaching and bringing religion to the people but in a different way, and in great measure to differen people. While the Franciscans addressed themselv

chiefly to the festering masses of the great cities, to the suffering poor, to the outcasts of society, the Dominicans addressed themselves particularly to the most highly educated and most intellectual circles, the 'intelligentsia.' This was a result of their original will to speak to the highly cultivated adepts of the Albigensian heresy. For this a careful training in theology and in Holy Scripture had been a necessary weapon in effective controversy; therefore St. Dominic legislated from the outset that his disciples should give themselves up with earnestness and ardour to theological study, as of the very essence of the Institute. Not only controversy with heretics, but the better and more effective teaching of theology in Catholic circles, came within his view when thus stressing the importance of theological study for the members of his Order; and beyond such practical objects, the pursuit of speculative theological Truth for its own sake held a great place in St. Dominic's mind. And so the Dominicans made first of all for the great theological centres, the University towns, and soon they took their place as teachers in the chief theological Faculties. In places without Universities they set up schools of theology of their own, for their own subjects, but open to any of the clergy who might desire to avail themselves of the better opportunities for making good theological studies.

In this way the Dominicans soon became the foremost teachers of theology. And it should be noted

that the theological and consequent strongly intellectual tradition of the Order did not originate with St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas, but went back to the Founder himself, albeit his theological outlook was not yet coloured by the Aristotelianism of the Thomist School.

This intellectual orientation of the Order, as integral part of its vocation, has of course affected the Dominican religious message to the world, and made it different in tone from the Franciscan. Still it may be questioned whether Franciscan influence even with the crowd has been more potent than the Dominican. From the earliest times the Dominican churches in the great centres of population have been greatly frequented by the average kind of Catholic congregations of men and women in the world, without more education or culture than those frequenting Franciscan churches; and Dominicans have ever shown themselves no less able to provide for the spiritual needs of ordinary good layfolk.

Unfortunately in one aspect we are at a disadvantage in regard to Dominican teaching as compared with Franciscan: no scraps of any writings of St. Dominic survive, nor any notes of his sermons or accounts of his preachings; nor apparently have any such remains of other early Friars, his disciples, come down to us.[1] Thus the materials do not exist for

[1] The book of Mother Theodosia Drane, *History of St. Dominic*, gives the best account in English of St. Dominic's person and his first disciples.

drawing any such living picture of the primitive Dominican message to the world as was possible with St. Francis. And so it seems that we have to ive St. Thomas the first place.

ST. THOMAS

As Dominicans stand pre-eminently for speculative uth, for the study and setting forth of philosophical d theological principles, it is natural to look to em for an exposition of the theory of the Christian iritual life in all its grades: and above all to the reat outstanding name of St. Thomas, whose over-astering place in the Dominican tradition is akin to at of St. Bonaventure in the Franciscan tradition. or shall we be disappointed. For he has indeed aid down those great principles that have become the roundwork of Catholic teaching on Christian ethics nd morality, and on the spiritual life; principles hat have been taken up, and have become the recog-ised teaching and the common property of all atholic Schools of theology and spirituality.

Abbé Pourrat in his general synthesis of the phases f Christian Spirituality, gives a clear and excellent nspectus of the heads of St. Thomas's doctrine on e spiritual life. We shall use also in setting forth t. Thomas's mind the book of the late Fr. Reginald uckler, O.P., *The Perfection of Man by Charity* (Burns, ates and Washbourne, 1893), a golden book, based, course, as being by a Dominican, on St. Thomas,

but appositely illustrated from SS. Augustine and Bernard, and other masters ancient and modern. It was written mainly for Religious; but much of it, especially the more fundamental portions, contains very sound instruction for all good Christians. I look on it as one of the very best of spiritual books known to me, being an admirable presentation of the Dominican theory of the spiritual life based on the teaching of St. Thomas.

When we come to St. Thomas's doctrine, it would be foreign to the purpose of this book to touch on the purely theological substratum of the structure—God's part—as sanctifying grace, infused virtues, gifts of the Holy Ghost. Only the points practical for all trying to lead a Christian life will be touched on.

In the first place, of much practical importance for all is a right idea concerning the 'passions.' These arise from love of self. To love oneself is to desire for oneself some good. This love of self is not necessarily disordered; it is part of the nature of man, and is its affective side. Such natural inclination toward what is good for us is an appetite, the appetite for pleasure. It is concupiscence, which does not imply anything wrong; it is merely a pleasurable appetite which, on account of the union of soul and body, resides always, in greater or less measure, in the sensible part of our nature, and is an appetite of the senses. From this sensible appetite arise the pas-

sions, which are of two kinds: concupiscible and irascible:

The passions arising from the concupiscible appetite urge us towards a desirable object, or avoidance of an undesirable one; they are love, desire, joy, and their opposites, hatred, aversion, sadness;

The passions arising from the irascible appetite make us struggle against the obstacles in the way of the possession of the object desired; they are hope and fear, and their opposites despair and audacity, and anger.

Fr. Buckler (p. 14) quotes St. Thomas:

> If we love a thing, we desire it when it is absent, we rejoice when it is present, we grieve when it is removed from us, and show our anger to those who deprive us of it. So that every act proceeding from a passion proceeds also from love, as from its cause.

Considered in themselves, simply as movements of the concupiscible or iracible appetites, the passions are neither good nor evil: they are praiseworthy or blameworthy according as they are regulated, or not, by the reason; but in themselves they are indifferent. They are forces of human nature that may be made to serve a good purpose or a bad. They have been disordered as the result of the Fall and of Original Sin; and the business of self-discipline, of mortification, of asceticism, is to keep them in right order and bring

them under subjection to reason, and so make them serve good purposes, not evil.

This sane and sound teaching on the passions St. Thomas took over from Aristotle; it is of basic importance for the ordering of Christian life, as it shows in its true colour the object of the strivings in the management of life to regulate and control the passions, not to suppress them as intrinsically evil. Other teaching, as that of Luther, and in a measure that of St. Augustine, and after him of certain spiritual writers, tended to regard the passions as evil and to be suppressed. The practical importance of the psychological and ethical principle thus laid down by St. Thomas can hardly be exaggerated in its bearing on the Christian and spiritual life of those endeavouring to love and serve God in the world.

St. Thomas makes Christian perfection lie in Charity, in the Love of God—'Faith, Hope, Charity, these three, but the greatest of these is Charity.' In this life charity never can be absolute, only relative, always capable of increase. It tends to exclude whatever is contrary to the love of God, and would impede the soul from tending towards Him. St. Thomas, like St. Bonaventure, distinguishes three stages or degrees in perfection, but does not use the actual terms Purgative, Illuminative, Unitive Ways,[1] adhering to the older terminology of Beginners, who resolutely strive to shun sin; Proficients or those

[1] At least they seem not to occur in the Index to the Summa.

making progress, who cultivate and develop and practise the virtues; Perfect, who aspire to unite themselves with God and possess Him.

It should be good news to those whose call it is to serve God and save their souls as everyday faithful Christian folk living and working in the world, that St. Thomas quite definitely makes perfection lie primarily and essentially in the Precepts, in observing the Commandments; and only secondarily, or instrumentally, in the Counsels (the three religious vows), in that they make easier a more perfect love of God. It is to be observed, though it seems overlooked by Pourrat, that by the Commandments St. Thomas means, not the Ten Commandments, as though perfection lay in the avoiding of mortal sin; but the two 'Great Commandments,' to love God with our whole heart, and our neighbour as ourself (*Summa* 2a 2ae, q. 184, art. 3). After all, this is our Lord's own teaching: 'If any man love me he will keep my commandments'; and again and again He makes perfection lie in doing the will of God. It is open to any man of good will to do this perfectly, as perfectly as is possible in this life, no matter what be his state of life and the nature of his duties.

But St. Thomas has more to say. It is recognised as one of the obligations incumbent on those in the Religious State, 'to aim at perfection.' St. Thomas lays down that aiming at perfection, tending to perfection, is an obligation incumbent on ALL; did not

our Lord say: 'Be ye perfect'? Perfection lies in the fulfilment of the Great Commandment, to love God with all our heart. The full perfection of love of God will be, and can only be, exercised in the next life; in this life there can be question only of a greater or less tending towards it. The Great Commandment is observed in this life truly, though imperfectly—'in some way but not every way' (aliquo modo, non omni modo). St. Thomas explains:

> A precept may be observed in two ways perfectly or imperfectly. It is observed perfectly when the end which is designed is attained. It is observed imperfectly when, although the end is not attained, the right order thereto is not departed from. In this life we carry out the Great Commandment and tend to perfection by striving to love God as far as we can, and referring to His love whatever we have to do, thus referring to God the whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, in such way that all these are used in accordance with the divine Will, and not in opposition to it.

St. Thomas explains more fully: [1]

> We may love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, by referring everything to divine love, actually or habitually. And to this perfection the precept binds us all. First, that man should

[1] This portion of St. Thomas's doctrine has been gleaned from Fr. Buckler's chapter, 'The Precept of Perfection.'

refer all to God, as to his end; St. Paul, 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God'; which is fulfilled when a man orders his life to the service of God, so that all he does is consequently ordered to God, excepting sin, which leads us from Him. This is to love God with all our heart. Secondly, that a man should subject his intellect to God, believing those things that are revealed by Him. Thus God is loved with the whole mind. Thirdly, that whatever a man loves, he should love in God, and refer all his affections to Him. Thus God is loved with the whole soul. Fourthly, that all our externals—words and works—should rest firmly on divine charity. Thus is God loved with all our strength. This therefore is a mode of perfect love, to which all are bound to tend by virtue of the precept.

Lest the urging of such an obligation should give rise in good simple souls to anxiety or discouragement, Fr. Buckler wisely points out (p. 18):

Souls *tend* to perfection very easily and, as it were, naturally, without adverting to the fact that they are doing so; that is to say, they tend in some way, 'aliquo modo.' Whether they are progressing quickly or only creeping, is another question. Every soul maintaining itself in grace is in some way tending to perfection, because if it persevere in that disposition, and fall not into

mortal sin, it will surely reach perfection sooner or later, *i.e.*, in the next life.

It is in full accord with the Dominican tradition, that we should owe to them, and in the person of St. Thomas, such a formulation of the theological principles and the groundlines of the theory of the spiritual life, and the manner in which all may, and must, obey the common precept of loving God and tending to perfection. It is this laying of foundations that we look for from them in the first line, rather than the ensuing practices of devotion. This clear and simple teaching of St. Thomas on the possibilities of perfection for all, is his, and the Dominicans', great contribution to the spiritual life and strivings of good Christians in the world.

It is well recognised that, as contrasted with St. Bonaventure and the Franciscans, St. Thomas and the Dominicans stand for the intellectual apprehension of theological and religious truth as the highest and truest way of approach to the knowledge and the love and service of God; whereas St. Bonaventure desired theology to be ever suffused with devotional warmth and to minister to piety and love rather than to speculative truth. The difference is briefly summed up in the fact that for St. Thomas the intellect and reason are the highest part of man; for St. Bonaventure the will and the emotional, or devotional, side. In this St. Bonaventure was in line with the Benedictines, the Victorines, and other

older Orders deriving from St. Augustine. The difference of atmosphere of the two Saints stands out in their two prayers given in the Missal for the priest's thanksgiving after Mass: St. Bonaventure's is an effusion of pious affections; in St. Thomas's there is a certain restraint and theological grip, which really says as much, in more subdued language, as St. Bonaventure's outpouring.

It follows that we are not to look to St. Thomas for devotional spiritual works such as we have found among St. Bonaventure's opuscula: his are in the high clear drier atmosphere of speculative theology. In a popular booklet on St. Thomas, issued by the editors of the Dominican periodical *La Vie Spirituelle*,[1] is an appendix of 40 pages on his 'Spiritual Writings.' The place of honour is given to the '*Summa Theologica* as a manual of the spiritual life.' The writer urges its claim as an 'ideal manual' for all sufficiently educated to understand it, even in a translation; for such it should be, along with Holy Scripture, 'the centre of their spiritual life.' It may be doubted that, save for Dominicans, the *Summa* is likely to supply for many of the rest of us what we look for in spiritual reading! Next come St. Thomas's Commentaries on Books of Holy Scripture, strongly theological rather than exegetical in character. Finally, five or six of the opuscula, again systematic theological expositions

[1] *Les Grands Mystiques: S. Thomas d'Aquin, sa sainteté, sa doctrine spirituelle.*

who died at thirty-three (A.D. 1380), little educated, unable even to write till three years before her death, with no theological formation, should be the accepted best interpreter of St. Thomas's theories, when reduced to practice, alike on the highest mystical life and on everyday Christian life in the world. Yet so it is. The representatives of the most recent phase of Dominican mystical theology and spirituality, as Père Garrigou-Lagrange in his *Perfection Chrétienne*, and Père Joret in his *Contemplation Mystique*, base their exposition of Dominican theory almost wholly on St. Thomas and St. Catherine, supplemented by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa. It appears that the vein of theology, principally on God and His workings, running through her writings, is in accord with St. Thomas : this no doubt was in great measure due to the Dominican environment in which she lived, her most intimate friend and guide, her confessor and adviser, being Fra Raimondo of Capua, her biographer, who later became Master General of the Order. She was not a nun, but a Dominican Tertiary, and she had an enthusiastic admiration for St. Dominic, St. Thomas, and the Order.[1]

A strong theological colour runs through the writings ; at times they soar to the very heights of mystical theology, for she had mystical experiences of all kinds, even the highest ; but they abound also in practical teaching on the ordering of life in the

[1] Pourrat's analysis of her teaching may be referred to.

world. The principal work is the *Dialogue*, wherein the Eternal Father, the Sovereign Truth, speaks with her, in answer to her questions and requests. It is in the form of revelations on the matters of the spiritual life, and also on the state of the Church at the time, the wounds from which she was suffering and the remedies. Those who write on St. Catherine declare it impossible to make any summary of the varied contents. The English translation has been made by Mr. Algar Thorold.[1] Of it he says :

> It is an almost unique specimen of what may be called theological spirituality ; for its special value lies in the fact that from first to last it is nothing more than a devotional exposition of the Creeds. Her insight is sometimes very wonderful. Every well-known form of Christian life, healthy or parasitic, is treated of, detailed, analysed incisively, remorselessly, and then subsumed under the general conception of God's infinite loving-kindness and mercy. . . . In the *Dialogo* we have a great Saint, one of the most extraordinary women who ever lived, treating in a manner so simple and familiar as at times to become almost colloquial, of the elements of practical Christianity.

Mother Drane (c. XV) and Professor Gardner

[1] *The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena*, 350 pp. (Burns, Oates and Washbourne), 1925. It is really a third edition. A reviewer in the *Dublin Review* bears witness to ' the exquisite beauty ' of the translation.

(c. XVI) give accounts and estimations of St. Catherine's writings, and illustrative extracts; both emphasise the fact that it is impossible to summarise the *Dialogue:* it must be read. Anyone who may read it will find in it a store of spiritual instruction suitable for all, Dominican through and through, most beautiful and helpful: but he should be prepared to read distressing passages, depicting in vivid colours the vicious lives of too many of the clergy, high and low.

That the reader may have just one specimen of what may be found, the following piece, surely a gem, is picked out:

> God speaks: I require that you should love Me with the same love with which I love you. This indeed you cannot do, because I loved you without being loved. All the love which you have for Me you owe to Me, so that it is not of grace that you love Me, but because you ought to do so: while I love you of grace, and not because I owe you My love. Therefore to Me, in person, you cannot repay the love which I require of you; and so I have placed you in the midst of your fellows, that you may do to them that which you cannot do to Me, that is to say, that you may love your neighbour of free grace, without expecting any return from him, and what you do to him I count as done to Me. This love must be sincere, because it is with the same love with which you love Me, that

you must love your neighbour. It is because your love of Me is still imperfect that your neighbourly love is so weak, and because the root of self-love has not been properly dug out (c. 64).

The French tractate named on p. 89 does give a summary in twenty-five pages of the 'Doctrine of the Dialogue,' which may be helpful. The keynote of all St. Catherine's spiritual doctrine is struck by the sentence spoken to her by God: 'Know, my daughter, I am He who is; and thou art she who art not'; the whole spiritual life consists in knowing God and knowing oneself—St. Augustine's 'Noverim Te, noverim me!'

Besides the *Dialogue* Catherine wrote numbers of letters, nearly 400 are extant. The only English edition seems to be the selection by Miss V. D. Scudder, *St. Catherine of Siena as seen in her Letters* (Dent, 1905, 1926). It contains nearly a hundred letters, chosen so as to illustrate the various sides of her correspondence. Most of the letters are concerned with the politico-religious affairs of Italy and the Church, in which Catherine was so strangely mixed up; others are addressed to religious of divers Orders and of both sexes, but often containing spiritual doctrine of wider application; finally, many are addressed to laymen and women, giving advice on devout Christian life in the world. Miss Scudder includes many of these last, in particular two to one Ristoro Canigiani. He was a citizen of

Florence, an advocate, who had taken a leading part in the turbulent Florentine political life, and had suffered heavy losses in the chronic feuds and revolutions that distracted that city. The letters show that he had consulted Catherine on various points of conduct. The words giving her practical advice are here picked out : [1]

> You say you have forgiven every man who has wronged you or wished to wrong you. This is a thing very necessary if you wish to have God in your soul through grace, and to be at rest according to the world.
>
> To demand and obtain your own in a reasonable way, this you can do with good conscience ; whoever wants to can do it : for a man is not bound to abandon his possessions more than he chooses.
>
> It is well and excellent not to go to the Bishop's house nor to the palace, but to stay peaceably at home. For if other people get excited, we are weak, and often we find our own soul excited, and doing unjust and irrational things. Yes, it is better to keep away.
>
> But when such poor men and women as are clearly in the right, and have no one to help them, and no money, it would be greatly to the honou of God for you to undertake their cause. Th pleases me much, and I beg you to do it.

[1] Scudder, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

As for selling the goods which you have over and above, and the showy garments, clothe yourself as you need, modestly, at no immoderate price, and you will greatly please God. And as far as you can, make your wife and your sons do the same; so that you may be to them example and teacher, as the father should be, who should educate his sons with the words and deeds of virtue.

I add one thing; that you abide in the state of marriage, with fear of God, and treat it with reverence as a sacrament, and not with intemperate desire. Then from yourself and her, like good trees, you will bring forth good fruits.

He should go to confession at least once a month, and to communion on the solemn Feasts, or at least once a year. He should try to hear Mass daily, or if he cannot daily, at least on the days ordered by the Church. Prayer must not be far from him; at fixed times, as far as he can, he should withdraw a little, to think of himself and God. She exhorts him to say daily the Office of the Blessed Virgin—a common practice of devout laymen in those days; to fast in her honour on Saturdays (also a common practice), and to observe the fasts of the Church. Finally

Avoid being at intemperate banquets, but live moderately like a man who does not eat to make a god of his belly; but take food for need, and not for the wretched pleasure it gives. It is impossible

that any man who does not govern himself in eating should keep himself innocent.

The second letter given by Miss Scudder is the Saint's answer to a scruple of Ristoro's, one that very often troubles good souls to this day :

> You wrote to me that you have a desire to feel contrition for your sins ; and not being able to feel it, you give up for this reason Holy Communion. Now we shall see whether you ought to give it up for this.

Her long answer is well worth reading. At the end,

> Therefore I conclude, and will that such folly be not in you ; but that you make yourself ready, as a faithful Christian, to receive the Holy Communion.

This, her principal letter of advice to a layman, must suffice. Of course the Lives give many extracts from the Letters that illustrate her mind. In conclusion, it may be said that anyone who reads Mr. Thorold's *Dialogue* and Miss Scudder's *Letters* will be in possession of a great body of the most authentic Dominican spiritual teaching for people in the world, and for all others, that will prove practical and helpful for the ordering of a good fervent Christian life in the midst of the daily duties of their state.[1]

[1] A series of small tracts has been issued by *La Vie Spirituelle*

SPIRITUAL WRITERS

Needless to say, Dominican writers on the spiritual life have abounded. In connection with the Dominican popular periodical *La Vie Spirituelle* has been issued in French translations a series of small *Chefs-d'œuvres ascetiques et mystiques*, for the most part by Dominican authors. St. Albert the Great would be the earliest in the list, could the treatises *De Adhærendo Deo* and *Paradisus Animæ* be confidently ascribed to him. But his authorship of both is questioned and it is now accepted that in all probability neither really is his.

In the same series appear in French short treatises: *The Vows and Virtues*, of Blessed Humbert, Master General of the Order; and *Spiritual Directory* of Blessed Venturin of Bergamo: both good, but definitely intended for religious. Also the treatise of St. Vincent Ferrer on *The Spiritual Life*. The editor claims for it that it was for long a sort of popular manual with layfolk, much as the *Imitation of Christ* has been. But it also is for religious, and based on the observances of the Dominican Rule; and for all the efforts of the editor to explain how it can be made applicable to all earnest Christians, there are laid as the foundations of the spiritual life a practice of poverty and of silence, that could not be

selected from the writings of St. Catherine, popularising her teaching on the spiritual life: in particular *Pensées Choisies* from the Dialogue and Letters.

put forward as in any way practicable or applicable for any except professed religious.

The famous Dominican mystics of the Rhineland in the fourteenth century, Tauler and Suso, are passed over; they take their place among the specialised teachers of the highest mystical theology, speculative, scholastic, intellectualist, especially Tauler. But many extracts from their works, more popular in character, may be found cited by Abbot Blosius in the works named in a previous page (p. 29).

Several Dominican writers and preachers are named by Pourrat and Vernet. Both signalise the spiritual writings of the famous Fra Geronimo Savonarola. Vernet's elogium may be cited:

> His works show forth a pure and sturdy spirituality. The two most beautiful are the *Treatise on the Love of Jesus* and *Considerations on the Passion.* His discourses linger, now earnestly, now tenderly, on the subjects dear to medieval piety, the Crib, the name of Jesus, the Cross, Mary the holy Mother and Queen.[1]

They are agreed as to the austere character of Savonarola's teaching: in the Renaissance Florence this was natural enough, and inevitable. But it seems to be a fact that, as compared with the Benedictine or Franciscan, the Dominican temper in spirituality verges towards austerity. This is in part

[1] *Medieval Spirituality*, p. 65. Savonarola's *Love of Jesus* has been issued in English by the Catholic Truth Society.

an inheritance from St. Dominic himself, whose own life was of extreme austerity, and who imparted to the Order a marked penitential spirit, at any rate in respect of its members. It is also, I venture to think, due in part to a somewhat academic straining to extreme logical conclusions certain theoretical theological principles.

Pourrat characterises the Dominican spirituality as being learned and constructed on the principles of scholastic theology:

> They insist above all on the renouncement of our own will and the mortification of our desires in all that concerns us. So we arrive at the destruction of self-love, and consequently abandon ourselves entirely to divine Providence, subordinating our own will to God's, and resting in absolute dependence on the divine decrees. The object of the will should be to remove any obstacles that stand in the way of the divine action in us. The Dominicans regard especially the divine action—the result, perhaps, of the theory of predetermination, and also of the theology of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Lacordaire was probably the outstanding Dominican of modern times, and his Letters, especially the *Letters to Young Men* (English translation) are full of useful guidance on the spiritual life to men living in the modern world. But Lacordaire was a formed

man, in full touch with the world and its problems, and already exercising his astonishing religious and spiritual influence, before becoming a Dominican; and so it may be questioned how far his spiritual direction was due to his Dominicanism. However, a little volume of *Pensées* on the spiritual life has been published in the series of *La Vie Spirituelle* already mentioned.

No such hesitations can be felt in regard to the famous Irish Dominican and pulpit orator, Fr. Tom Burke. A Dominican friend assures me that he was a Dominican by formation, through and through: that his preaching was ever based on sound Dominican theology; and that the printed volume of his Sermons gives principles and advices on the spiritual life to be lived in the world, that bring home the Dominican teaching to all men of good will.

We, myself and my readers, are naturally most interested in modern English presentations of this teaching. Fortunately we have in Fr. Bede Jarrett, the English Provincial, a man of wide experience of the conditions of modern life in England and English-speaking countries, who not only preaches and lectures, but also writes. I am assured his *Meditations for Layfolk* (Catholic Truth Society, 300 pages), first printed in 1915 and reaching the tenth thousand in 1930, provides the devout laity with the very thing it is the object of this chapter to point out, viz., the spiritual life based on Dominican theological princi-

ples, and prepared for the needs and possibilities of the laity. In the Preface he laments 'the present tendency of the Catholic layfolk to imagine that sainthood and perfection are the peculiar inheritance of religious'; with the result that laymen for the greater part aim at no more than the bare essentials of Catholic practice. 'It is surely to be regretted that the whole treasury of the Church, which is most needed just by those whose busy lives are crammed with material interests, should be left to the hands of so small a proportion of her children.'

To remedy this great void in the Christian life of so many, he pleads for the daily practice, at least customarily, of a short time of meditation of a very simple kind, for which he offers the materials and suggests a scheme; referring for further instruction to the late Fr. Bertrand Wilberforce's little C.T.S. tract, whereof over sixty thousand have circulated; *An Easy Method of Mental Prayer*. He himself gives the advice:

> It must always be borne in mind that the object of the meditator should not be to get through the whole page, but to *pray;* hence stop reading as soon as you have enough to go on with. Continue to pray as long as you find yourself in touch with God.

There is another book of similar meditation by Fr. Jarret, for 'Young men' in *The Space of Life*

Between (Sheed and Ward) boyhood and full manhood, 'the most forlorn folk in the Kingdom of God'; also one for Boys, *Living Temples* (Burns, Oates and Washbourne).

In these three books is provided for the laity living in our modern English conditions of life, spiritual guidance as thoroughly Dominican, as the guidance of Bishop Hedley's Retreat is thoroughly Benedictine.

I feel prompted to add that, even if Fr. Jarret's plea for a daily meditation be hardly practicable in many busy lives, at any rate a serious Sunday meditation, outside the Mass, would surely in most cases be possible. Such a meditation once a week would be of incalculable value in spiritualising the lives of men and women busy throughout the week.

In conclusion may be named as an excellent popularisation of the whole Dominican theory of the spiritual life, the recent short book of Père Masson O.P., translated in the 'Catholic Library of Religious Knowledge' (Sands & Co.): *The Christian Life and the Spiritual Life*. It is much to be recommended, as presenting in a clear way, easily understandable, Dominican doctrine on the spiritual life. It will illustrate both its highly theological colour, as based throughout on the theology of St. Thomas; and also that element of an at any rate theoretical severity that has been mentioned.

THE ROSARY

The great outstanding Dominican contribution to the popular religion of the Catholic people in the West is the Rosary. There is no need to say anything here on the vexed question of its origin, because it is not disputed that the Rosary of Our Lady now in general use—the fifteen decades of 'Pater' and ten 'Aves' each—owes its wide propagation and its popularity to Dominicans. It is the most widespread and the most highly authorised of all popular devotions, its habitual use being strongly urged on all by a succession of Roman Pontiffs, from Pius V to Leo XIII. Leo enjoined its public recitation in all parish churches daily throughout October in each year, an injunction repeated by his successors. Of all non-liturgical prayers it is the one that approaches most nearly to the canonical Office, by reason both of the formal nature of its authorisation, and of the public manner of its recitation by the Faithful in common in church, as well as for private prayer. Non-Catholic generally do not appreciate the Rosary, looking on it as a gabbled repetition devoid of mind and heart. But Catholics who have grown up using their beads from childhood appreciate and value it. It is a kind of prayer that can be used in circumstances when other kinds of prayer are hardly possible: walking in the streets, on the top of a 'bus, even hanging on to a strap in the underground rail-

way, one can be saying the Rosary, the hand working the beads kept in the pocket to avoid observation, so that no one need see or know what is being done.

I heard a story of the war that I cannot vouch for, but that is likely enough, to this effect: The officer who was preparing a group of young officers fresh out, for their first experience at the Front, after imparting the final instructions, as a last word pulled a rosary out of his pocket and said: 'And you ought to get one of these things: I'm not an R.C. myself, but any R.C. will tell you how to use it. It's the very thing for the trenches.' And so it was: be the story true or not, certain it is that countless Catholic soldiers found occupation and consolation and strength during the long weary hours of watching and waiting in the trenches telling endless beads through the hours of darkness.

Professor Howley, professor of psychology at Galway University, in his book on the Psychology of Mystics has a chapter on the psychology of the Rosary. He says that the fingering of the beads acts as a sort of outlet for nervous tension, so leaving the mind freer to concentrate without distraction on the business of prayer.

Fr. Bede Jarrett speaks of the Rosary as summing up the very method of prayer propagated by Dominicans: [1]

The primitive method of prayer was vocal

[1] *English Dominicans: Ascetical Teaching* (C. T. S. Tract), p. 15.

ejaculatory prayer, modelled no doubt on the prayer of our Lord in the Garden, but is also the natural spontaneous utterance of every heart. The mind is fixed on God or on some truth about God, and the heart quite naturally and instinctively is moved to praise Him or thank Him, or bless or repent or love. Vocal prayer, therefore, followed by silence, in which the soul actively salutes God and converses with Him, is the simplest form of prayer and is the first beginning of contemplation, or, indeed, of prayer at all. Meditation, or the discursive argument or reasoning of the mind, is really a preparation for prayer. It is only when the mind has finished its discursive action that prayer as such begins. Hence the Rosary, which sums up in itself the very method of the Black Friars, is especially designed so that the mind should hold steadily before it a moving and touching picture of God's kindness or His mercy, that the lips should repeat words familiar enough for the attention to be wholly free to go elsewhere, and for the heart to dwell in loving attention on God. Hence, too, the incessant repetition of the *Ave Maria*, which is peculiarly advocated in the Dominican circle, so that St. Dominic has filled the whole Church with it under the form of the Rosary.

A word must be said on the Dominican Confraternity of the Rosary, one of the most widespread and popular of the Confraternities of the Catholic Church.

It originated towards the close of the fifteenth century, and is closely connected with the Dominican Order and under its control. A condition of membership is that the names be enrolled in a general Register with the Order. The object is to promote the devotion of the Rosary, and members are expected to say the full fifteen decades each week. The membership is enormous, and it is one of the chief ways in which Dominican work for the sanctification of the world is carried on.

THE THIRD ORDER

After the somewhat full account of the Franciscan Third Order there is no need to say much of the Dominican. The two Orders of Tertiaries were very kindred in origin, motive, and nature. I have not found in English any such full account of the Dominican Third Order as the three Capuchin lectures that were so helpful in writing of the Franciscan; only a little tract by Fr. Fabian Dix, O.P. (C.T.S.). It is not clear in what sense St. Dominic himself started the Third Order; Père Mandonnet gives as the date of its formation 1285. Like the Franciscan it arose out of the revivalist movement set going by the preaching of the Friars, and the desire of good folk to imitate their life as far as might be possible for those living in the world, and carrying on the duties and businesses of their state of life. As in the case of

the Franciscan Tertiaries, the rules and obligations were, at any rate in our eyes, onerous; and both institutes were at the beginning called Orders of Penance, and the members Penitents. In practice they seem at first to have been very much alike, only the one was controlled by Franciscans, the other by Dominicans.

The Dominican Third Order never has been modernised, as Leo XIII modernised the Franciscan. Consequently at the present day the Dominican, at any rate according to its laws, has retained much more of its ancient form, more of its monastic character, and greater austerity of rule. Thus, according to the Rule, every Friday is still a fast day, and all the week-days of Advent. The Office of the Blessed Virgin is to be recited daily; or else an alternative office of a fixed number of 'Paters' and 'Aves' for each canonical hour, in all seventy-seven of each: for Franciscan Tertiaries the Office is reduced to a daily twelve 'Paters,' 'Aves' and 'Glorias.' In regard to the fasts, dispensations may be given by the Director, and are freely given. For the rest, the idea and the working of the two Third Orders is much the same: attendance when possible at a monthly meeting for an exhortation and devotional exercises; a general restraint and simplicity in the ordering of life, and special earnestness in carrying out the virtues of the Christian life according to one's state. The result is to produce a body of Catholic laymen

and women living exemplary and fervent Christian lives in the world.

We have seen how Leo XIII, himself a Franciscan Tertiary, expressed the wish that all the Faithful should belong to the Franciscan Third Order. Pope Benedict XV was a Dominican Tertiary, and he expressed the same wish in regard to the Dominican Third Order:

> Among the means of holiness which seem to us the most useful and opportune for the Christian people, We recognise the Dominican Third Order as one of the most eminent, most easy, and most sure. In it every class of persons may, as it were, find a realisation of the desire for a more perfect life. In virtue of Our Office as promoter of the salvation of souls, We invite the Faithful of the whole world to gather under the sacred standard of the Third Order of St. Dominic.

Of the Franciscan Third Order it was possible to say that it is the chief instrument through which St. Francis speaks and works to-day. The like could not be said of the Dominican Third Order, because always the Dominican theological School and the Preaching will be St. Dominic's most potent voice to the world, according to his own mind. But in the second line may be placed the Third Order, as carrying on his mission to the ordinary run of good Christian folk, the great population of the Kingdom of God.

However, I understand that in practice the official attitude of the Order is that membership of the Third Order should be kept within fairly strict limits; but that all the Faithful should be urged to participate in the life of the Order by joining the Confraternity of the Rosary.

IV. CARMELITES

THERE is no need to enter on the subject of Carmelite Origins, because as an Order in Western Europe the Carmelites date from the middle of the thirteenth century, and rank as Friars along with Franciscans and Dominicans. During the Middle Ages the Carmelites seem not to have produced spiritual writers of note, nor any distinctive Carmelite type of spirituality. It was not until the sixteenth century that the two great Carmelite teachers, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, arose and founded what is now the most accredited Catholic School of Mystical Theology, known as the Carmelite School. But though this was in modern times, still these two Saints inherited from the past the spirit inherent in the Order from olden times, and their teaching is but the development and carrying forward of the spirituality traditional in the Middle Ages and in the earlier Christian centuries; so that the Carmelite School as represented by them really draws its inspiration from earlier times, and may properly find a place here as one of the Old Schools of Spirituality.

Both writers, it is true, are associated with Mystical Theology in the heights, and both wrote specifically

for their own Discalced Carmelites of the Reform, friars and nuns, one of the most austere and contemplative of the Orders; so that it may be wondered if they have any message for devout people living their lives in the workaday world, the sort kept in view in this book. But they have; and St. Teresa especially has a good deal of sound and very helpful advice for them.

ST. TERESA AND HER BROTHER

Let us first turn to her *Letters*.[1] She was in communication with a number of devout secular men and women, and it would be of interest to have the spiritual advice she gave them. Few of these letters have been preserved; there are, however, some to her brother, Don Lorenzo de Capeda. He was a man of good social position, who was living the 'devout life,' even intensively, and cultivating a habit of prayer. His sister was his 'director,' and a very sane and sensible one she was. A few gems of her advice to this devout layman are picked out.

Letter CLXI (Stanbrook translation, Vol. II):

Lorenzo had just purchased a property, and he began to regret it for the trouble it occasioned, and consequent loss of recollection and prayer; Teresa wrote:

Do you imagine there is no trouble about col-

[1] Translated and edited in four volumes by the Benedictine Dames of Stanbrook (Thomas Baker).

lecting rents and continually making distraints for them? Do not fancy that if you had more time you would pray more. Disabuse yourself of the idea; for time well spent, as in looking after your children's inheritance, does not hinder prayer. God often gives more in a moment than in a long period.

It is a great grace that what pleases others should weary you. But you must not set it aside on that account, for we must serve God as He wishes, not as we choose. I realise that it is right for you to desire devotion. But it is one thing to wish for it, and another thing to ask for it. Believe me, you are taking the best course by leaving it to the will of God, and placing yourself in His hands.

He is not to get up during the night for prayer:

It is important that you should sleep well. On no account must you rise, whatever fervour you may feel; and do not be shocked if you should oversleep yourself, and do not mind if you fell asleep again after you had been called.

Be sure to sleep enough, for your brain requires it: otherwise, though you do not feel it at the time, you may become unable to pray at all. And do not expose yourself to severe cold, which is bad for the pain in your side.

Lorenzo evidently was one who needed holding back, not goading on.

Letter CLXXII:

We who are getting old must take care of our bodies, lest they should weaken the intellect, which is a great trial.

Our Lord has shown great mercy by giving you such good health. It is no small boon you sleep so soundly: God gives you a great blessing.

He thought of stripping his house of carpets, plate, etc.:

No; such things do not matter as long as you realise their unimportance, and are detached from them. This is only reasonable, for as, later on, you must arrange marriages for your sons, your house ought to be suited to your position in life.

Letter CLXXV:

She sent him a hair shirt and discipline, but with strict limitations as to the use of them:

God prefers your health and obedience to your penances. Be sure to take enough sleep and collation (supper on fast days). Take care not to injure your health.

It is a great grace that you bear so well your inability to pray, and a sign you are resigned to the will of God, which I believe is the greatest benefit obtained by prayer.

The spirit of this advice is sensible, and good

religion, too, useful for all leading Christian lives in the world, even if they do not need to be restrained in the practice of piety, as Lorenzo had to be.

ST. TERESA'S 'MANSIONS'

But St. Teresa's general instructions for good lay folk are found, curious perhaps to say, for the most part in the book *The Interior Castle*, the most formal and the highest of her expositions of mystical theology. But this will be understood when the conception or plan of the work is explained.

The 'Interior Castle' lies within the soul, and the progress of the soul towards the perfection of the spiritual life is depicted as the passage through a number of 'mansions' or antechambers leading to the central royal apartment wherein dwells the King —the centre or apex or fund of the soul, dear to the German mystics, the 'one essence of the soul,' St. Thomas calls it.[1]

In setting forth St. Teresa's exposition of her allegory a choice has to be made between allowing her to do it herself in a series of extracts; or by a compression and paraphrase of what she says. I have before me such a series of extracts, and very impressive they are; but it is to be feared that they would make the exposition unduly long; also lengthy extracts, however good, are apt to become

[1] This subject is dealt with in *Western Mysticism*, 'Epilogue (2)' and 'Afterthoughts,' § 12.

boring. So it seems preferable to set forth the pith of her teaching, so far as it is applicable to the purpose of this book, in shortened form, her own expressions being freely interwoven in the text without constant use of citation marks. All citations and all references are from the Stanbrook translation, edition 2, 1912 (Thomas Baker); and it is to be hoped that some readers may be encouraged to have recourse to the work itself. In pursuance of the idea of the progress of the soul through successive antechambers in the Castle—'mansions' she calls them—leading towards the inmost royal apartment, St. Teresa first speaks briefly of the very many souls that live in the courtyard of the Castle, not entering its precincts at all: these are the Christians living thoroughly careless worldly lives, concerned hardly at all with their souls or with God, falling frequently into grave sins, seldom praying or thinking of God. Such cannot be said to be exercising any spiritual life, or indeed any really Christian life. These crippled souls are in a miserable and dangerous plight, unless our Lord come to the rescue (I, i, 7, 8).[1]

Then there are those who enter the precincts of the Castle and are in the First Mansion. They are thus characterised: They are still very worldly, but they have some desire to do right; now and then, but rarely, they think of their souls and commend them-

[1] The reference means: Mansion I, Chapter i, paragraphs 7, 8 (as numbered in Stanbrook edition).

selves to God; they pray a few times a month, but with mind filled with a thousand other thoughts. Still it is a great gain to have found their way into the Castle at all (I, i, 10, 11).

It is surprising, but also encouraging, that St. Teresa should reckon this Mansion as part of the Interior Castle, or such souls as being embarked in any, even the most rudimentary, phase of the spiritual life. Yet so she does. Still such evidently are not the devout lay folk of good will kept in view in these pages. These are to be found in the Second and Third Mansions. A soul in the First Mansion, though not in a state of mortal sin, is so worldly and preoccupied with earthly riches, honours, and affairs, that even if it desires to enter into itself and progress, it is prevented by these distractions and seems powerless to overcome the obstacles. These first rooms are in the basement of the Castle and little light penetrates to them, so that their inhabitants, though not in a state of mortal sin, still are in semi-darkness and see scarcely anything (I, ii, 15, 16). For all that even this First Mansion contains such great riches, and such treasures, that if the soul only manages to elude the temptations and obstacles, it cannot fail to advance further (I, ii, 12).

It is wonderfully consoling, especially as coming from St. Teresa, to know that this Mansion, though those in it are running on the very lowest gear of Christian life, still contains great riches and treasures.

But, after all, it is sound theology and New Testament: every baptised soul free from mortal sin is a Temple or Sanctuary of God, and has the Holy Ghost as Indweller, spreading abroad in her the love of God and the sevenfold Gifts.

The gate whereby we pass from the First Mansion to the Second is prayer and meditation; the exercising should be in self-knowledge and humility; but the soul should sometimes cease thinking of itself, to rise in meditation on the grandeur and majesty of God. We shall advance more by contemplating God than by keeping our eyes fixed on ourself. We shall never learn to know ourselves except by endeavouring to know God (II, ii, 10).

I have said that it is in the Second and Third Mansions that those will usually be found for whose assistance this book is mainly intended.

In the Second Mansion are souls who want to do better than in the First, and realise the importance of not remaining there. They begin to practise prayer more earnestly. They hear our Lord calling them, even though they be still engaged in the business and amusements and pleasures and vanities of the world. They often fall into sin and rise again. Yet in one way or another God never ceases calling them to Himself. He speaks to them by words spoken by pious people, by sermons or good books; sometimes He calls souls by sickness or troubles, or by some truth that He teaches them during prayer,

for tepid as they may be in seeking Him, God holds them very dear (II, i, 4, 5).

Such souls are not to be downcast at the slow progress they make; God will wait for us many a day, and even many a year, if only He sees perseverance. Perseverance is the first essential; with it we are sure to profit greatly (6).

The great aim of one beginning to practise prayer should be to endure trials, and to resolve and strive the best he can to conform his own will to the will of God. In this consists the highest perfection of the spiritual life. Our whole welfare consists in doing the will of God (15).

So let us endeavour to do our best; and if one occasionally lapses into sin, let him not lose heart and cease trying to advance (16).

The Second Mansion covers the case of those living ordinary good Christian lives in the world, serving God truly, but making no special and sustained effort in the spiritual life. St. Teresa's Third Mansion is in effect St. Francis of Sales' 'Devout Life,' the Christian life in the world lived intensively, under high pressure, at higher gear. Of it St. Teresa says:

> Thanks to His mercy I believe there are many such people in the world: they are very desirous not to offend His Majesty even by venial sins; they love penance and spend time in meditation; they employ their time well, exercise themselves in

works of charity to their neighbours, are well ordered in their conversation and dress, and those who own a household govern it well. Such souls know that nothing would induce them to commit a grave sin—many not even a venial sin advertently; and they employ their life and riches well (III, i, 8, 10).

It is evident, I think, that St. Teresa here has in mind people living in the world what St. Francis of Sales calls the 'devout life,' and for whom he wrote the golden book so named, proclaimed by our Holy Father Pius XI as 'the most perfect book of its kind'; which reasserted the great truth, almost lost sight of in his day, that a life of perfection may be lived in the world, in the midst of its calls and duties.[1]

It is at the beginning of the Fourth Mansion that St. Teresa looks back and speaks of the exercises of those in the first three, and gives advice thereon.

She speaks of sensible devotion, of aridity, and of distraction in prayer.

Sensible devotion, though a gift of God, is natural; it begins in ourselves and ends in God. Such feelings of devotion are most common with souls in the first three Mansions, who ordinarily use their understanding and reason in making meditations. They should, however, at times try to elicit acts of praising God, rejoicing in His goodness, and desiring He be

[1] See following chapter, on St. Francis of Sales

honoured and glorified. In order to make rapid progress it is not so essential to *think* much as to *love* much; therefore we must practice whatever most excites us to love. Love consists not in great sweetness of devotion, but in a fervent determination to strive to please God in all things, in avoiding as far as possible all that would offend Him, and in praying for the glory and honour of His Son, and for the growth of the Catholic Church. These are the signs of love; do not imagine it consists in never thinking of anything but God, or that if our thoughts wander a little, all is lost (IV, i, 7).

Next she speaks of distractions in prayer, and the difficulty of controlling the imagination.

She says it had puzzled her, that while to all appearance the understanding and powers of the soul were fixed on God, the imagination was wandering elsewhere. We cannot stop the revolution of the heavens, neither can we control our imagination. When it wanders, we fancy that all the powers of the soul follow it, and that the time spent in God's presence is wasted; whereas perhaps the soul is closely united to Him in the inner Mansions, while the imagination is in the Courtyard, struggling with a thousand venomous creatures, and gaining merit by its warfare. And so we need not let ourselves be disturbed, nor give up prayer, as we are tempted to do (IV, i, 8, 9).

All this though in the Fourth Mansion is retro-

spective and concerns the Third Mansion, the 'devout life.' The Fourth Mansion proper really embraces two quite distinct stages of spiritual life and prayer, 'prayer of Recollection' (c. iii, 1), and 'prayer of Quiet' (see *Western Mysticism*, ed. 2, pp. xxii ff.). She had previously, in the *Life written by Herself*, discoursed on these matters. There she expounds the stages of prayer under the figure of the fourfold ways in which a garden may be watered (*Life*, c. xi, 10, 11). The four 'Waterings' correspond to the Third to Sixth Mansions of the *Castle*, the first two Mansions being absent, as not coming within her scope, and the seventh, because she had not yet experienced such a spiritual state.

ST. TERESA ON MEDITATION

In Chapters XI, XII, XIII of the *Life* she speaks of meditation, the usual kind of mental prayer of beginners in the spiritual life: those in the Third Mansion, living the 'devout life,' who water the garden of the soul by what she calls the first method of watering, that whereby the gardener draws the water by dipping the bucket into the well and carrying it round the garden.[1] She gives instructions and

[1] The second method is when the gardener draws the water by help of a windlass; the third when the water is conveyed through the garden by brooks and channels, with little labour of the gardener; the fourth when the garden is watered by rain from heaven, without any labour of the gardener. Thus the watering is progressively with less and less exertion of the gardener, but more and more effective (c. XI, 10, 11).

advices that make quite clear her idea of meditation. It will prove helpful to piece together out of these chapters a conspectus of her method of meditation—if method it may be called.

Chapter XI. Of those who are beginners in prayer, we may say that they are those who draw the water up out of the well, a process which is very laborious; for they must be wearied in keeping the senses recollected, and this is a great labour, because the senses have hitherto been accustomed to distractions. It is necessary for beginners to accustom themselves to disregard what they hear or see, and to put it away from them during the time of prayer. They must strive to meditate on the Life of Christ, and the understanding is wearied thereby. Thus far we can advance of ourselves—that is, by the grace of God—for without that, as everyone knows, we never can have one good thought.

This is beginning to draw water up out of the well. God grant there may be water in it! That, however, does not depend on us. By water here I mean tears, and if there be none, then tenderness and an inward feeling of devotion. What then will he do here, who sees that for many days he is conscious only of aridity, disgust, dislike, and so great an unwillingness to go to the well for water that he would give it up altogether, if he did not remember that he has to please and serve the Lord

of the garden; if he did not hope for some gain by a labour so great as that of lowering the bucket into the well so often, and drawing it up without water in it? Working with the understanding is drawing water out of the well in buckets.

He must rejoice and take comfort, and consider it as the greatest favour to labour in the garden of so great a King; and as he knows that he is pleasing Him in the matter—and his purpose must not be to please himself, but Him—let him praise Him greatly for the trust He has in him. The time will come when he shall be paid once for all. Let him have no fear that his labour is in vain: he serves a good Master whose eyes are upon him.

There is no reason why he should be distressed, who is already raised to so high a degree as this is, of wishing to converse in solitude with God, and to abandon the amusements of the world. The greater part of the work is done: give praise to His Majesty for it.

The soul which begins to walk in the way of mental prayer with resolution, and is determined not to care much, neither to be greatly afflicted nor to rejoice whether sweetness and tenderness fail it, or our Lord grants them, has already travelled a great part of the road. Let that soul have no fear that it is going back, though it may often stumble. It is certain that the love of God

does not consist in tears, nor in the sweetness and tenderness which we for the most part desire, and with which we console ourselves; but rather in serving Him in justice, fortitude and humility.

It is of great importance that no one should distress himself on account of aridities, or because his thoughts are restless and distracted; neither should he be afflicted thereat, if he would attain to liberty of spirit, and not be always in trouble.

Chapter XII. In these beginnings of devotion we are able in some degree to help ourselves: because thinking of, and pondering on, the sufferings of our Lord for our sakes moves us to compassion, and the sorrow and tears which result therefrom are sweet. The thought of the blessedness we hope for, of the love our Lord bore us, and of His resurrection kindles within us a joy which is neither wholly spiritual nor wholly sensual; but the joy is virtuous, and the sorrow is most meritorious.

The soul may place itself in the presence of Christ, and accustom itself to many acts of love directed to His sacred Humanity, and remain in His presence, and speak to Him, pray to Him in its necessities, and complain to Him of its troubles; be merry with Him in its joys, and yet not forget Him because of its joys. All this it may do without set prayers, but rather with words befitting its desires and its needs. This is an excellent way

whereby to advance, and that very quickly. This practice of the presence of Christ is profitable in all states of prayer, and is a most safe way of advancing in the first state, and of attaining quickly to the second.

Chapter XIII. To those who can use their understanding in meditation, eliciting from one subject many thoughts and conceptions, I say that they are not to spend the whole time in that way. Let them, rather, place themselves in the presence of Christ, and, without fatiguing the understanding, converse with Him, and in Him rejoice, without wearying themselves in searching out reasons; but let them rather lay their necessities before Him, and the just reasons there are why He should not suffer us in His presence: at one time this, at another time that, lest the soul be wearied by always eating of the same food. For example: we set ourselves to meditate upon some mystery of the Passion; let us say, our Lord at the Pillar. The understanding goes about seeking for the sources out of which came the great labours and the bitter anguish which His Majesty endured in that desolation. It considers that mystery in many lights, which the intellect, if it be skilled in its work or furnished with learning, may there obtain.

There are many souls who make greater progress by meditation on other subjects than on the sacred

Passion. Some, if tender-hearted, are greatly fatigued by continual meditations on the Passion, but are consoled and make progress by meditating on other subjects. But the Passion and Life of Christ, the Source of all good, must not be omitted from time to time.

He who begins is in need of instruction, whereby he may ascertain what profits him most. There is no state of prayer, however high, in which it is not often necessary to go back to the beginning: the knowledge of our sins, and of our own selves, is the bread which we have to eat with all the meats, however delicate they may be, in the way of prayer.

Coming back to the meditation on Christ bound to the Pillar, it is well we should make reflections for a time, and consider the sufferings He there endured, for whom He endured them, who He is who endured them, and the love with which He bore them. But a person should not always fatigue himself in making these reflections, but rather let him remain there with Christ, in the silence of the understanding. If he is able, let him employ himself in looking upon Christ, who is looking upon him; let him accompany Him, and make his petitions to Him; let him humble himself and delight himself in Christ, and keep in mind that he never deserved to be there. When he shall be able to do this, though it may be in the begin-

ning of his prayer, he will find great advantage; and this way of prayer brings great advantages with it—at least so my soul has found it.

And in the *Castle* (IV, i, 7) she said that when we are making such acts and affections, 'we must be very careful, when God gives these sentiments, not to set them aside in order to finish the accustomed meditation.' Of herself, she says that she was unable to exercise the understanding in eliciting thoughts and conceptions from the subject of meditation; and for any so constituted the understanding is a hindrance rather than a help (*Life*, XIII, 16).

It seemed well worth while thus stringing together the bits out of these thirty pages which deal directly with meditation, so as to present a precise picture of what she understood by meditation and of the manner in which she advised it should be made. It is informal and free, much more akin to Blosius' 'Conversations' than to systematised methods with 'points.' In the example she takes, the mind should look on the figure of our Lord at the Pillar, and the understanding should for a time play upon it, working out the thoughts aroused and realising the meaning of it for Him and for us. Soon we should break forth into loving talks with our Lord, after the manner of Blosius, with acts and affections and petitions, and at times with the silence of the intellect. Meditations of this kind are possible, nay easy, in a ten-minute visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and so are within the

reach of earnest souls unable to find time for set half hour meditations.

ST. TERESA ON CONFORMITY TO GOD'S WILL

Although the subject-matter of the Fifth Mansion (the 'Third Watering' of the *Life*) is properly concerned with what she calls 'Prayer of Union,' being the same as Fr. Baker's 'passive union purely intellectual' (*Sancta Sophia*, p. 531), she makes a remarkable digression of such universal application, and so practical, that, though long, it will be reproduced here almost in its entirety. After expatiating on the wonders and the delights and the effects on the soul of such mystical unions, in the third chapter she turns to those of her nuns who are not recipients of such favours, and consoles them in a piece most pertinent to the purpose of this book, viz., to bring out what she has to say for good souls, not only Carmelites, but those living their life in the world.

Mansion V, Chapter iii:

3. The advantage of entering this Fifth Mansion of Union is so great that it is well none should despair of doing so because God does not give them the supernatural gifts described above [*i.e.*, the state of passive union]. With the help of divine grace true union can always be attained, by forcing ourselves to renounce our own will and by following the will of God in all things.

4. Oh, how many of us affirm that we do this, and believe nothing else. If it be the case, I can only declare that we have already obtained this grace [of union] from God. There is, then, no need to wish for that other delightful union described above, for its chief value lies in the resignation of our will to the will of God, without which it could not be reached. Oh, how desirable is this union [of wills]! The happy soul which has attained to it will live in this world and in the next without care of any sort. No earthly events can trouble it, unless it should see itself in danger of losing God, or should witness any offence offered Him.

5. Is it necessary, in order to attain to this kind of divine union, for the powers of the soul to be suspended [as in the passive prayer of union described in the first chapters of the Fifth Mansion, or in the 'Third Watering' of the *Life*]? No; God has many ways of enriching the soul and bringing it to this Mansion, besides what might be called 'a short cut.' But be sure of this, in any case the 'self' must die, and it will cost you more in this way [*i.e.*, of forcing the will into conformity with God's will]. In the former manner this death is facilitated by finding ourselves introduced to a new life; here on the contrary we must give ourselves the death-blow. I own that the work will be much harder, but it will be of higher value, so that your

reward will be greater if you come forth victorious; yet there is no doubt it is possible for you to attain to this true union with the will of God.

6. This is the union I have longed for all my life, and that I beg our Lord to grant me. It is the most certain and the safest.

The foregoing passage, as I have pointed out elsewhere,[1] is of great interest; it makes clear beyond possibility of doubt that St. Teresa recognised two ways of arriving at perfect union with God: the laborious ascetical way of renouncing our own will and conforming ours to God's will, which, with the help of God's ordinary graces, is open to everyone in what state of life soever, who has the courage to pursue it; and the mystical way she calls 'a short cut,' wherein God does it for the soul by bringing about the fully passive union she has been describing. Her mind may, perhaps, not inaptly be illustrated by a similitude: There are two manners of mounting a building, by the staircase or by the lift. The first is slow and laborious, and by dint of our own exertion; but is exposed to little danger of accident. By the second we only place ourselves in the lift, and then rapidly and without exertion, by a power outside ourselves, we are borne aloft. But by both means we arrive at the same landing.

She goes on to emphasise how difficult it is to attain to perfect conformity with the will of God:

[1] *Western Mysticism*, ed. 2, 'Afterthoughts,' p. lxi.

6. Alas, how few of us ever obtain it! Those who are careful not to offend God, and who enter the religious state, think there is nothing more to do. How many maggots remain in hiding, until like the worm, which gnawed at Jonas' ivy (or gourd), they have destroyed our virtues. These pests are such evils as self-love, self-esteem, rash judgment of others even in small matters, and a want of charity in not loving our neighbour quite as much as ourselves. Although we satisfy our obligations sufficiently to avoid sin, yet we fall far short of what must be done in order to obtain perfect union with the will of God.

7. There is no need for us to receive special consolations from God [*i.e.*, prayer of union] in order to arrive at conformity with His will. This does not mean that we must so submit to the will of God as not to sorrow at such troubles as the death of a father or brother, or that we must bear crosses and sickness with joy. . . . Our Lord asks but two things of us: love for Him and for our neighbour: these are what we must strive to obtain. If we practise both these virtues perfectly we shall be doing His will, and so shall be united to Him. But we are very far from obeying and serving our great Master perfectly in these two matters: may His Majesty give us the grace to merit union with Him; it is in our power to gain it if we will.

ST. TERESA ON LOVE OF ONE ANOTHER

8. I think the most certain sign that we keep these two commandments is that we have a genuine love for others. We cannot know whether we love God, although there may be strong reasons for thinking so; but there can be no doubt about whether we love our neighbour or no. Be sure that in proportion as you advance in fraternal charity, you are increasing in the love of God. We should watch most carefully over ourselves in this matter, for if we are perfect in this point we have done all.

11. Our Lord expects *works* from us. If you see a sick sister whom you can relieve, never fear losing your devotion; compassionate her; if she is in pain feel for it as if it were your own, and, when there is need, fast so that she may eat, not so much for her sake as because you know our Lord asks it of you. This is the true union of our will with the will of God.

12. If you possess fraternal charity I assure you you will certainly attain to the union I have described [of our will with God's will]. Beg our Lord to grant you perfect love for your neighbour, and leave the rest to Him. He will give you more than you know how to desire, if you constrain yourselves and strive with all your power to gain it, forcing your will as far as possible to comply

in all things with your sisters' wishes, although you may sometimes forfeit your own rights by so doing. Forget your self-interests for theirs, however much nature may rebel; when opportunity occurs take some burden upon yourself to ease your neighbour of it. Do not fancy that it will cost you nothing and that you will find it all done for you; think what the love He bore for us cost our Lord, who to free us from death, Himself suffered the most painful death of all—the death of the Cross.

Conformably with this she elsewhere says to her nuns the pithy words: 'If you tell me of your love of one another, I'll tell you of your love of God!'[1]

I have cited this passage thus at length, because it surely is most useful and helpful doctrine for all men of good will. It is, after all, but an enforcement and practical application of St. John's great slogan, repeated from our Lord's own lips, 'To love one another,' as the fulfilling of the Christian law. Similarly, the doing of God's will, and not any personal religious experience, is ever held out by our Lord, as by St. Teresa, as the real test and proof of love of God. And although such perfect conformity to God's will as St. Teresa holds up to her nuns must be difficult and rare in full acquirement; still the principle of conforming our will to God's is the very

[1] I know I have read this in St. Teresa, but I cannot recover the place.

ABC of the spiritual life, and the ideal held out to all Christians: and here we have St. Teresa's assurance that this union of our will with God's, which we all can try for, is of like religious worth—nay greater—than those mystical unions that are in practice out of reach of most, and in fact, even in favourable conditions, are experienced but by few.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

To turn now to the other great Carmelite teacher, St. John of the Cross, Teresa's friend, helper, and, it may be said, disciple. He has lately, 1926, been raised to the rank of Doctor of the Church, so that under his ægis a certain range of ideas on the spiritual life and on prayer are securely entrenched. As his writings treat only of mystical theology, it is on account of his teaching on prayer and the spiritual life and contemplation that he has been made a Doctor: '*Doctor Mysticus*' he may be called. True, his writings are up in the heights of mysticism; true, also, that he says, even more precisely than St. Teresa, that he writes in view of his own Discalced Carmelite friars and nuns: still he does, especially in one place, speak of beginners in regard to their prayer, and in a way that is of general application to all leading the 'devout life,' or trying in any way to cultivate the habit of prayer.

He writes (*Living Flame*, stanza iii, §§ 33–36, ed 1912; stanza iii, line 3, § 5, ed. 1864):

> The state of beginners is one of meditation and of acts of reflection. It is necessary to furnish the soul in this state with matter for meditation, that it may make reflections and interior acts, and avail itself of the sensible spiritual heat and fervour; for this is necessary in order to accustom the senses and desires to good things, that being satisfied by the sweetness thereof, they may be detached from the world.
>
> When this is in some degree effected, God begins at once to introduce the soul to another kind of prayer, and that very quickly, especially [*N.B.*, but not only] religious. This passage takes place when the discoursive acts and meditation fail, when sensible sweetness and first fervours cease, when the soul cannot make reflections as before, nor find any comfort, but is fallen into aridity. . . . Souls in this state are not to be forced to meditate or to apply themselves to discoursive reflections laboriously effected, neither are they to strive after sweetness and fervour. . . . The soul must be lovingly intent upon God, without distinctly eliciting acts beyond those to which He inclines it; purely, simply, lovingly intent upon God, as a man who opens his eyes with loving attention.

Elsewhere (*Dark Night*, 'Night of Sense,' i, 10):

> Persons in the state of aridity and dryness in prayer will do enough if they keep patience and persevere in prayer, contenting themselves simply with directing their attention lovingly and calmly towards God; and all this without anxiety or effort, or desire to feel and taste His presence.

The passages are given in full and commented on in *Western Mysticism*, in the section 'The Contemplative Life,' and in the 'Afterthoughts' of the 2nd edition. St. John's mind on the more initial stages of prayer, and so far as may be of general application and utility for devout people in the world, has been well brought out by the Capuchin Father Ludovic de Besse in a simple book, *La Science de la Prière*, translated into English (Burns, Oates and Washbourne). He claims, I think rightly, that it is an exposition, in simple popular form, of the more elementary portion of St. John's teaching on prayer, up to the limit of what may be called ordinary prayer. The kind of prayer here spoken of by St. John may best be called, after his description, 'Prayer of Loving Attention,' as this expresses most clearly its character. It seems that St. Teresa has in mind a like kind of prayer in the 'Prayer of Interior Recollection' that she speaks of in Chapter iii of the Fourth Mansion, as being the first stage in that Mansion, preceding the 'Prayer of Quiet,' dealt with in the first two chapters. She

describes this prayer more clearly in No. VIII of the 'Relations' on her states of prayer:[1]

> It is a certain interior recollection of which the soul is sensible: withdrawing into itself, it seeks to go away from the tumult of its outward senses; for it closes the eyes on purpose that it may neither see, nor hear, nor understand anything but that whereon the soul is then intent, which is, to be able to converse with God alone. In this prayer there is no suspension of the powers and faculties of the soul; it retains its full use of them; but the use of them is retained that they may be occupied with God.

In the Fourth Mansion, iii, 7, she says that in this prayer of Recollection the intellect and imagination need not cease entirely from acting; the will may make loving aspirations occasionally; and often for a very short time the mind ceases to think at all: 'Recollection does not require us to give up meditation nor to cease using our intellect.'

The last sentence shows that this prayer of Recollection is not a constant kind of prayer with those who exercise it at first, but occasional, alternating with meditation and the working of the intellect and the will in acts and affections. St. John says the same concerning his prayer of Loving Attention (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, c. xv):

> It may be asked whether those whom God has

[1] Appendix to her *Life*, ed. 4, 1911.

begun to lead into this prayer (of loving attention) are in virtue of this commencement never again to return to the way of meditation and reflection [with images and concepts] ? To this I answer it is not to be supposed that those who have begun to have this pure and loving knowledge are never to meditate again. . . . Yea, rather, at first when we see that our soul is not occupied in this quiet or knowledge, it will be necessary to have recourse to reflections, until we attain to the habit of it in some degree of perfection. . . . Until we arrive at this, sometimes one, sometimes the other, occurs in the time of prayer, in such way that often the soul finds itself in this loving or peaceful attendance upon God, with all its faculties in repose ; and very often also it will find it necessary, for that end, to have recourse to meditation, calmly and with moderation.

These two outstanding Carmelite teachers, Doctors it may be said, on the whole range of the spiritual life, of prayer, and of mystical theology, so overshadow all other Carmelite writers that there is little left to be said about the others : in fact, later Carmelites do little more than expound and comment on their teaching. And indeed their teaching, as just set forth in these pages, in its application to devout souls in the world, is so fine and so practical that it needs no supplementing, but may be taken as the Carmelite contribution to the Ways of Christian Life.

SCAPULAR CONFRATERNITY

However, the widespread popular devotion of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the best known of the Carmelite provisions for people in the world, corresponding to the Third Orders of Franciscans and Dominicans. But the Carmelite Scapular Confraternity differs from the Third Orders in that it is purely personal, without external organisation such as they have: no officials, no business meetings, no time of probation, no semblance of being an Order. Individuals are enrolled and have to wear the small brown scapular. Thereby they are admitted to a participation in the prayers and good works of the Carmelites, friars and nuns, and they may be buried in the full Carmelite habit—my own mother was. But for gaining the principal privileges of the scapular somewhat onerous conditions are imposed: daily recital of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, or else abstinence from meat on all Wednesdays and Saturdays in addition to the Fridays. By a decree, however, of Leo XIII all confessors have the power of commuting these into other pious exercises or good works more suitable to modern conditions. This devotion of the Scapular is one of the most far reaching of Catholic pieties and spreads Carmelite influence far and wide.[1]

[1] Full information is to be found in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, articles 'Scapular,' 'Sabbatine Privilege.'

ST. TERESA OF LISIEUX

It will be appropriate to round off the Carmelite chapter with the latest Carmelite message to the world, made in our own times. It may be that some readers will go to the writings of St. Teresa and St. John, and may experience a sense of disappointment and discouragement on finding them largely concerned with heights of prayer and mystical experiences, and also uncompromisingly austere and exacting:—St. John is, to my mind, the most exacting of Christian teachers. Yet in this austere garden of St. Teresa and St. John grew in our day a 'Little Flower,' St. Therèse of the Infant Jesus, who has in a wonderful way adapted the essence of their Carmelite teaching to the needs and the possibilities of the modern world. For it is to be emphasised that, strangely different though she was from St. John, and even from St. Teresa the Great, it was on their writings and spirituality that she was nourished and formed. Her appeal is just at the present time probably more wide cast and more compelling than that of any other Saint. The reason is that she is recognised as holding out a new type, a more humanly realisable type, of sanctity than what has heretofore been usual. The Dominican Father Petitot in one of the most thoughtful and least sentimental of the many books about her,[1] points out certain

[1] *Saint Teresa of Lisieux; a Spiritual Renascence.* Translated by the Benedictines of Stanbrook (Burns, Oates and Washbourne).

negative features of her spiritual life, marking it off from the recognised features commonly found in the lives of the Saints: the absence of violent asceticism and self-inflicted mortifications; the absence of extraordinary favours, as ecstasies in prayer, visions, and the rest; and the absence of multifarious activities. A canonisation without such elements is, if not a new departure, certainly rare. Her own desire was that it should be widely known that 'holiness is accessible to all sorts of people,' and this without doubt is the lesson of her life, and the key to her popularity among men and women of all sorts. Her 'little way' is, needless to say, a very big way. It lay essentially in this, that she really, fully, and effectively learned and lived up to St. Teresa's great slogan of renouncing our own will and conforming it in all things, and above all, in small things, to the will of God; a lesson it is felt that may be in good measure learned and practised by all men of good will in any station of life. This popularisation of the spiritual teaching of the great St. Teresa and of St. John is making the Carmelite spirituality one of the greatest religious forces in the modern Catholic world.

Such was the mind of the Holy Father Pius XI when in the Bull of Canonisation he said: 'Faithful people of Christ, to-day the Church presents to you a new and admirable model of virtue, which you all ought continually to contemplate.'

V. SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES

It may come as a surprise to meet here the name of St. Francis of Sales. And indeed, frankly, this chapter is an afterthought. The idea of the book was to set out the practical daily religion offered to the Christian people by the Old Orders, in the belief that spiritual food on which Western Christendom had been nurtured for the thousand years from 500 to 1500, must still have in it elements suitable for all time, and therefore for the needs of the present time, and helpful for the instruction of the Christian people. The extending of the subject-matter to include St. Francis, if it need apology, has been motived by various considerations. Principally by the call of our Holy Father in the first of his Encyclicals on the ordering of the Christian life, issued on the occasion of the tercentenary of St. Francis's death, to Bishops and all, to do what in them lies in propagating widely and bringing home to the Faithful the great truth for which St. Francis, above all Masters and Doctors, pre-eminently stands: that 'holiness of life is not a privilege of a few to the exclusion of others, but that all are called to it, and that the obligation rests on all.' He says that St. Francis was given to the Church by

God for the particular purpose of denying 'the prejudice that true holiness appears to be surrounded by so many difficulties that it cannot be attained by those living in the world.' Against this St. Francis 'set out to show how holiness is perfectly reconcilable with every kind of duty and every condition of civil life.' (Encyclical, January, 1923.)

This being the very purpose of this book, it seemed fitting to obey the Holy Father's mind, and stretch the scope, so as to include St. Francis's Way of the Christian Life.

There is another motive. It is plain Catholic doctrine that the religious and spiritual instruction of the Faithful is primarily and essentially the function of the Bishops and the Pastoral clergy, not of any religious Order or Orders. The Religious may be helpers welcomed by the Bishops, commissioned by the Holy See; but they are not part of the Church's Hierarchy, whose most essential work is the Christian formation of the people. And so the contribution of the four Older Religious Orders having been set forth, in order that there may not seem to be any suggestion that such spiritual instruction is a perquisite of the Religious Orders, the teaching of this great secular priest and bishop is given also, manifestly the best of all.

St. Francis of Sales was a Savoyard, born in 1567; he was ordained 1593; the four years 1594–98 were devoted to the wonderful mission among the Cal-

vinists of the Chablais; he became Bishop of Geneva 1602; in 1610 he founded, along with St. Jane Frances de Chantal, the Order of Visitation nuns; he died 1622.

The most recent and best English Life is that by Fr. Harold Burton. A monumental critical edition of his writings has been produced, 1892–1923 under the auspices of the First Monastery of the Visitation, Annecy, the first ten volumes, the Works, being edited by the English Benedictine, Dom Benedict Mackey, and eleven volumes of Letters edited by other hands.

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE

This is the most characteristic of St. Francis's writings, and was, it may be said, epoch-making. For at the time of its writing a sort of idea prevailed, perhaps especially in France, that any real holiness could be attained only by entering some austere Order. St. Francis set himself to combat an idea so mistaken and so pernicious, and to show how holiness can be attained by people in the world, living in society, and carrying out all the duties of their position in life.

The book was first published in 1608, and successive editions appeared, until in 1619 the fifth 'definitive' edition, St. Francis's final revision, was brought out. It has been edited in the most approved scholarly way by Dom Mackey in Volume III of the

great edition of the Works. And in 1911 this text has been reprinted exactly in a dainty little volume by the nuns of the Visitation at Annecy.[1] Those whose French will allow them to read and enjoy St. Francis's own Savoyard French, with its archaisms and old spellings—no difficulty for any who possess modern French—should read the original thus provided in this edition, and not any translation.

But for those who desire the book in English, the excellent and faithful translation of the aforesaid definitive edition by Fr. Allan Ross of the London Oratory is the one without hesitation to be recommended (No. 5 of the Orchard Books; Burns, Oates and Washbourne). From every point of view, it should supersede the generally current translation by Dr. Richards (also Burns and Oates).

Fr. Ross has published also a little companion volume bringing out the chief aspects of the teaching of the book, and illustrating it from St. Francis's other writings, and in particular by extracts from his Letters.[2]

We come now to the task of setting out in briefest summary the heads of the teaching of the book on the *Devout Life* in their most practical aspect.

The treatise is in five Parts.

I. This Part is preliminary; its purpose is to encourage good souls and brace them to the resolu-

[1] Annecy: J. Abry, Editeur.
[2] *St. Francis de Sales and the Introduction to the Devout Life* (Burns, Oates and Washbourne).

tion of pursuing a devout life. He explains what is meant by a 'devout life': an ordinary good Christian life is one in which the love of God keeps us habitually from sin; a 'devout life' is the Christian life of Charity, but at high pressure, on a high gear, intensively cultivated. Devotion is a spiritual nimbleness and vivacity. 'To be good, one must have love of God; to be devout one must have, besides love, a great alacrity and readiness in carrying out the actions prompted by love.' Genuine devotion will be different in different states of life; it must be accommodated to the strength, to the affairs, and to the duties of each one individually. 'Devotion when it is true never spoils anything, but rather perfects all things; and when it becomes inconsistent with the lawful vocation of anyone, it is without doubt false.' Devotion is possible in any good state of life: 'There are many kinds of devotion which are suitable for those whose lives are spent in secular avocations'; 'Wherever we are we may, and ought to, aspire to the perfect life' (cc. I, II, III).

The first stage is Purgation, first from mortal sin, and then from affection to sin. To help the soul to effect this process of purgation the Saint supplies a set of ten formal meditations, culminating in the choice of the Devout Life, with a general confession, and a determination to purge ourselves from affections to venial sins and to evil inclinations.

Part II: Prayer and the Sacraments, the chief

instruments of the devout life. This Part sets forth a sort of Rule of Life with its daily and weekly exercises of piety and devotion that St. Francis proposed for aspirants to the devout life. It is to be feared that the reading of this programme may discourage and frighten off many good souls, desirous, for all that, of leading a devout life. Thus he urges with great insistence, as of utmost importance, the practice of mental prayer—set meditation—daily for an hour (c. I). It must frankly be recognised that, at any rate in the conditions of modern life, with the regulation business hours at offices, shops, works, daily meditation for an hour, or for half an hour, would be for the great majority of men and women impracticable and even impossible. Men and women in business have to leave home so early in order to be at their office in time, and get home so late in the evening after a long day's work, that surely no confessor would urge or advise an hour's meditation. For working men and women it would be even more impossible. And in addition he prescribes daily Mass, spiritual reading, rosary, and other exercises of piety. But it is not to be supposed he intended the devout life to be only for a leisured class, to the exclusion of the workers: nothing could be more foreign to his whole mind.

The fact seems to be this: The one whom St. Francis had definitely in mind in composing the book —the actual 'Philothea'—was a great lady at Court,

wife of a courtier who held high position in the State; and so she had many social duties befitting her position. Though the mistress of a large establishment, no doubt it was managed by steward and housekeeper, and she was to a great extent mistress of her own time. And so St. Francis lays on her a great number of religious exercises, far beyond what an ordinary lady, wife of a professional man and mother of a family, still less the wife of a working man, could find time to carry out. In one place at the end St. Francis seems to be aware of this: no doubt he suggests the full measure of what would be desirable, though not all of it is necessary; and each one trying to live the devout life can only do as much as he can.

Part III: The Exercise of Virtues. This, if I mistake not, is the very heart and core of the book, its most valuable part, a golden treatise on Christian ethics and morality—golden alike for all, for Christians in the world, for priests, for religious. The Saint deals with the great outstanding virtues and their opposites in a way most helpful, most sensible and practical for all, most elevating. The chapters on patience, humility, gentleness, on poverty of spirit in riches and richness of spirit in poverty, on sins of the tongue—all are quite admirable and eminently practicable even in the busiest and most occupied lives. St. Francis may seem exacting to us: he is exacting, of course; every spiritual master

worth his salt must be exacting—none more so than our Lord Himself. Yet in his own day he was thought by many to verge towards over-indulgence, even laxity in places. On the other hand, the noteworthy chapters on Christian marriage were criticised as unduly outspoken; such criticism was in itself unreasonable, infected with a certain Manichaean taint; it is little likely to find place now. A prominent Catholic doctor, a married man, certainly leading the devout life, once said to me that, as far as he knew, only two spiritual writers have written sensibly and helpfully for married people, St. Paul and St. Francis of Sales.

The twenty-third chapter, on Mortification, is most practical and will meet with ready acceptance nowadays, when the practices of fasting, disciplines, and the like have fallen into very general abeyance. But St. Francis is no laxist; provided his teaching be taken all round. For, if he incline to be indulgent in the matter of bodily mortifications, he is proportionately exacting in the matter of interior mortifications, the mortification of the will. To take him on the first, and leave him on the second, would be wholly to misconceive and misuse his advices. And this brings us to the very kernel of St. Francis's doctrine on the mortification, that is, the asceticism or training and exercise in self-denial, that must be an integral part in the devout life, and in any real Christian life, or in any decent moral life whatsoever. On this

subject c. VII of Fr. Ross's supplementary volume may be read with advantage.

And so, the opening two chapters of this Third Part are fundamental for the whole business of the devout life. They are 'On the Choice we ought to make in regard to the Exercise of Virtues.' To summarise these chapters:

> Opportunities seldom present themselves for the practice of fortitude, magnanimity, magnificence; but gentleness, temperance, modesty, and humility are virtues with which all the actions of our lives should be coloured. There are virtues more excellent than these; but the practice of these is more requisite. We must have a good and ready store of these general virtues since we must make use of them almost continually. Among the virtues we should prefer that which is most conformable to our duty, and not that which is most conformable to out inclination. . . . Every vocation must needs practise some special virtue; and each one ought to practise in a particular manner those that are requisite to the kind of life to which he is called. . . . Among the virtues we should prefer the most excellent and not the most showy. There are certain virtues which, because they are more perceptible and more material, are highly esteemed and always preferred by the common run of people; so they commonly prefer temporal almsgiving to spiritual, the hair-shirt, fasting, the

discipline and bodily mortifications to gentleness, mildness, modesty, and other mortifications of the heart, which nevertheless are much more excellent. Choose the best and not the most esteemed, the best and not the most showy. . . . We must have a good opinion of those whom we see practising virtues, although with imperfection, since even the saints have often practised them imperfectly. . . . Let us exercise ourselves simply, humbly, and devoutly in the little virtues, the conquest of which our Lord has proposed to us; such as patience, meekness, mortification of the heart, humility, obedience, chastity, consideration for others, bearing with their imperfections, diligence and holy fervour.

THE LITTLE VIRTUES

This doctrine of 'The Little Virtues' is a favourite with St. Francis; and it implies a very real and searching mortification of the heart and will, the kind of mortification he ruthlessly calls for. Therefore I may be allowed to illustrate and give point to it by words of that remarkable Jesuit spiritual writer, Père Grou. In the twentieth of his Spiritual Maxims, towards the end, he speaks of fraternal charity, and brings out how this virtue must show itself by our putting up with anything and everything from others. This will be felt to be a big and a taxing general order.

But it is not enough for Père Grou : he goes on to tell us ' to behave in such a way that others have nothing to put up with from us.' This at the first blush seems a reasonable and a simple principle. But he leaves us under no illusion :

> To put up with everything from others, and to behave in such a way that they have nothing to put up with from us, is the mark of the most eminent virtue. But to attain to this, what a war has to be waged on our own faults and on self-love, which is their root ! The great and only way of becoming charitable is to give ourselves up to interior mortification and root out the smallest fibres of self-complacency. But this is just what we do not wish to realise : interior mortification is the thing most repugnant to nature. We will willingly take on austerities, and wish for more ; we will fast beyond our strength ; we will undertake all sorts of practices of devotion ; we will pass several hours a day in prayer : but to break our own will, to curb our ill-temper, to check our impatience, to suppress our sensitiveness ; to put a stop to false suspicions, to evil-minded curiosity, to rash judgements ; to cure ourself of unjust prejudices ; in a word, to combat all the vices of our spirit and our heart :— this is that which very few indeed will face ; and of those who do engage in this painful warfare, there are still fewer who have courage to carry it through to the end.

It would surely be an admirable and a most practical point of the nightly examination of conscience: 'Have I during this day so behaved as to give anybody anything to put up with from me?' Père Grou's enforcement of the 'little virtues,' for so they are, brings out at once their efficacy, for all their simplicity, as deep-probing mortifications, and their power to produce even the 'most eminent virtue.' Moreover, no religious state, or other state, is requisite for their exercise; they may be practised equally well in any state of life whatsoever.

But in truth this doctrine of the 'little virtues' goes back to a greater than Père Grou, a greater even than St. Francis; to St. Paul in his wonderful encomium of charity (I Cor. XIII). Be it noted that he speaks of that charity, that love, that gives their value to the greatest religious acts, to prophecy, to faith, to almsgiving, to martyrdom, and without which they all profit nothing: it is, as the concluding words show, that charity or love of God that is the greatest of the theological virtues: 'And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.' And so, when St. Paul sets out to enumerate the qualities and manifestations of this charity, we would expect him to speak of ecstatic states of prayer, of great austerities, of working miracles, of heroic labours in God's service, and the like. But no!

Charity is patient (or long-suffering), kind,

envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, behaveth not unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, never faileth.

The little virtues, one and all! This Third Part of the *Devout Life* contains St. Francis's admirable practical detailed advices as to how they may be exercised in the daily life of the world. He is here at perhaps his best, most characteristic side, making good his claim to the title given him by Abbé Bremond, as foremost representative of the religious movement of 'Devout Humanism.' The penetrating examination and appreciation of St. Francis in the first two volumes of his *Histoire du Sentiment Religieux en France* is one of the outstanding features of Bremond's great entrancing work.

Parts IV and V may be summarily dealt with. IV gives instructions on ordinarily occurring difficulties in the practice of a spiritual life, as temptations, dryness in prayer, weariness. V is an exhortation to a yearly review and renovation, what would now be called a Retreat.

TREATISE ON THE LOVE OF GOD

This is St. Francis's other great work, indeed the greatest of all: 'of greater moment and importance,' says Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical. The *Introduction to the Devout Life* is a treatise in ascetical theology,

chiefly concentrated on the cultivation of virtue; the *Love of God* carries things forward into the higher realm of mystical theology. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose it is only for religious, for priests, for souls called to tread special secret paths. St. Thomas's teaching stands firm, that the Great Commandment of Love of God is an obligation binding on all; and therefore, an eminently practical instruction, showing in a most attractive way how this may be aimed at, is for everyone leading a Christian life, no matter in what conditions. And so the treatise of the Love of God is for all men of good will, who are striving to learn how to know, love, and serve God, in what way of life soever.

The work itself is of considerable length; it occupies volumes IV and V of the Annecy edition. Dom Mackey's excellent translation into English runs to 550 closely printed pages.[1] And here arises a difficulty. So long a book is a bigger proposition than the modern mind will readily face, with its mental hurry and impatience of anything long, and the profusion of short manuals on every topic, the spiritual life like the rest. To meet this difficulty the Sisters of the Visitation Convent at Harrow have taken their courage in both hands, and ventured on the bold attempt of shortening their Holy Founder's masterpiece, thus to render it more generally acces-

[1] *Library of St. Francis of Sales*, Vol. II (Burns, Oates and Washbourne).

sible. With complete success. The work of abbreviation was made relatively easy by St. Francis himself, who suggests that those using the book for purposes of practical devotion may leave out the first four Books which lay down the philosophical and theological basis of the treatise; also various chapters throughout. Moreover, there is an exuberance in St. Francis's language which, though it has its charm in his own archaic Savoyard French, is apt, when literally turned into English, to pall on our more restrained taste. So a process of pruning has been carried out all through. In these ways the treatise has been reduced to rather less than half the original, but the pith and marrow of the last eight Books has been faithfully preserved; and the redaction provided by the Sisters of the Visitation gives to English readers the teaching of this classical work in a form in every way adapted to their needs and tastes. This is the edition used for the ensuing presentation of the core of the teaching as applicable for those leading a devout life in the world.[1]

As here presented the Work begins with Book V: 'Of the two principal Exercises of Holy Love, Complacency and Benevolence.' It is to be noted that 'love of God' is in itself ambiguous; it may mean 'God's love of us' or 'our love of God.' It is used throughout in this second meaning. This Book is a

[1] *The Love of God.* Foreword by Cardinal Bourne, Introduction by Abbot Butler (Sands & Co.), 285 pp.

sort of summing up of what has gone before in the four Books omitted.

It lays down the working principle that the exercise of the love of God is twofold; the love of Complacency and the love of Benevolence. The love of Complacency is *affective*, it is the love we feel for God; the love of Benevolence is *effective*, because it makes us exercise ourselves to do things out of love of God: by the former we have an affection for God and for whatsoever He loves; by the latter we serve Him and do what He ordains: our love of complacency gives us pleasure in God; our love of benevolence gives God pleasure in us ('Introduction').

The love of complacency assumes the form of condolence when exercised on the Sufferings and Passion of our Lord, and this is the highest expression of complacency. The love of benevolence will make us desire to praise God, and to call on all creatures to join us by playing their parts in the great work of giving praise and thanksgiving to Him.

Books VI and VII deal with the Love of Complacency, which is exercised chiefly in Prayer. The first six chapters of Book VI are a very useful instruction on what may be called ordinary or usual prayer; the rest of Book VI and all Book VII soar up to the heights, being based mainly on St. Teresa's later 'Mansions.' It is noteworthy that at the outset St.

Francis identifies mystical theology, not with these heights of prayer, but with prayer itself, of any kind; the title of the first chapter is 'Mystical Theology, which is no other thing than Prayer,' and that of the second, 'Meditation, the first degree of prayer or Mystical Theology.' This should cure us of any shyness of mystical theology, or idea it is a branch of theology only for the *élite* in the Kingdom of God. St. Francis tells us that all prayer is mystical theology: 'Prayer and mystical theology are the self-same thing.'

What the holy doctor in these chapters says of prayer is of special interest, in that he here puts himself in line with the earlier age-long tradition in regard to meditation and contemplation; whereas in the *Devout Life* both the specimen meditations in Part I and the directions in cc. II–VII of Part II are quite definitely framed on the newer ideas of methodised meditation which after growing and taking shape through a couple of centuries, reached their culmination in St. Ignatius's 'Exercises': the meditation is divided into parts, Preparation, Composition of Place by the imagination, Considerations (three) by the understanding, Affections of the will and Resolutions, and for Conclusion a Colloquy—all on St. Ignatius's plan. It is true he does give the advice, that if the affections begin to flow before the considerations, free rein is to be given them and the considerations omitted, even wholly, their only purpose being to arouse affections; and no attempt

should be made to work out the plan of the meditation as proposed. One is never to restrain the affections, but always to allow them free play whenever they present themselves (Bk. II, c. VIII).

In the *Love of God* we seem to be in another atmosphere in the preliminary six chapters of Book VI; it will be easily recognised as a reversion to the older tradition. A few short extracts will make it plain: [1]

Chapter I is on Prayer in general.

Prayer is a colloquy, a familiar talk or conversation of the soul with God; We speaking to God and He to us; we aspiring to Him, breathing in Him, and He in return breathing His inspirations upon us.

Such prayer is called mystical because the conversation is altogether secret, and there is nothing said in it between God and the soul save only from heart to heart, by a communication incommunicable to all save those who make it. Where love reigns there is no need of the sound of words.

Chapter II: Meditation is the first degree of prayer, the beginning of mystical theology. It is an attentive thought, voluntarily reiterated or retained in the mind, to excite the will to holy and salutary affections and resolutions.

No formal method is proposed: In meditation the devout soul passes from mystery to mystery

[1] An eye is kept on Dom Mackey's translation throughout.

not indiscriminately, nor simply to console herself with the wonderful beauty of these divine objects, but with deliberate intent to find motives of love or of some heavenly affection. Having found them she makes them her own, relishes them, takes care of them, and placing them in order within her heart, she puts apart what she sees most useful for her advancement, making resolves the while suitable for times of temptation.

The next four chapters, III–VI, deal with Contemplation, bringing out its difference from Meditation. In this he follows the ideas of the old spiritual writers on contemplation, as St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor. Contemplation is defined, 'A loving, simple, permanent attention of the spirit to divine things.'

> Prayer is Meditation until it has produced the honey of devotion, and then it is converted into Contemplation. We meditate to bring forth the love of God, and having brought it forth we contemplate God. Meditation is the mother, and Contemplation the daughter of love.

The meaning is quite clear; meditation has effected its purpose when it has produced devotion, affection, love; it then should cease and give way to contemplation, which St. Francis, using a favourite term of St. John of the Cross, describes as a 'loving attention' to God, the considerations and working of t

understanding ceasing. Thus for St. Francis this contemplation is the natural and normal issue or culmination of meditation, not only in the case of those whose state of life makes them cultivate mental prayer and the spiritual life intensively, but in the case of any who are in the habit of practising meditation at all. Contemplation such as St. Francis here speaks of is, with God's grace, a simple and, be it hoped, an ordinary thing with devout, or even good earnest souls, and will be on occasion the experience of a good Christian life seriously lived, above all in the act of the Holy Communion. In all these chapters St. Francis is at one with the Old Masters on the spiritual life, who looked on contemplation as a practical concern for all good Christian folk.[1]

These first six chapters of Book VI are profitable for all good souls; the remaining chapters and all Book VII deal with the higher and highest experiences of the soul in prayer and union.

LOVE OF BENEVOLENCE

Books VIII and IX pass on to our other kind of love of God, the love of Benevolence, which finds its expression in doing things pleasing to God. St. Francis has not in mind chiefly external activities and

[1] See *Western Mysticism*. In order to guard against a misconception, it is well to say that, as Fr. Robert Steuart, S.J., in his excellent little tractate, *A Map of Prayer*, points out, St. Ignatius in the 'Exercises' uses the term 'Contemplation' in a sense different from the traditional use of the older writers. (See below, Chapter VII.)

good works of zeal: these will come; he has in mind chiefly those interior exercisings of the soul on itself that make up the whole range of self-discipline and interior mortification. Like as we have seen in St. Teresa, he brings this all under the one idea of uniting our will with God's will in all things, a programme that may be carried out even perfectly in any state or condition of life. He distinguishes the Love of Conformity and the Love of Submission.

In Book VIII he speaks of the former: 'the Love of Conformity by which we unite our will to the Will of God, signified unto us by His Commandments, Counsels, and Inspirations.' The 'signified Will of God' that is made known by His commands, which include the duties of our state of life, is of course not optional; it has to be obeyed. The love of benevolence is shown by our conforming our will to the command, not merely observing it, but accepting it, embracing it, loving it, according to the spirit of the hundred and eighteenth psalm. In chapter VI, speaking of conforming our will to God's as signified by His counsels, the Saint's instructions stand out characteristically. He gives the warning that prudence has to be exercised in judging as to what counsels it may be God's will for the concrete 'me' to follow, it being by no means God's will that everyone should follow all His counsels. Only as God wills should His counsels be observed, according to the diversity of persons, circumstances, etc. I

must all be controlled by charity, the queen of the virtues; and often charity will forbid the individual to follow some counsel, even the great evangelical counsels. There is infinite variety in the ways in which charity regulates the observance of the counsels in accordance with God's will for each one; our part is to conform our will to God's in regard to those counsels which we have reason to believe He intends for us.

Very noteworthy are Chapters X–XIV on the difficult matter of 'Conforming our will to God's as signified to us by His inspirations.' Difficult; because, while the reality of such promptings and motions of God's grace in the soul is a first principle of theology, and our docility and pliability in accepting these inspirations is the prime condition of fidelity and progress in the spiritual life; it is equally the case that often supposed inspirations are illusions, the promptings not of God's grace, but of our own heart and self-will. St. Francis's advices on how to judge of inspirations as God's will, here and now for *me*, are most practical, full of spiritual sense. The final chapter, 'A short method how to know the will of God,' is a remedy against over-anxiety, worry, scrupulosity, in trying to weigh up which line of action is more perfect, more pleasing to God. Only over matters of some importance should great care be taken:

We are not accustomed to weigh coppers, but

only valuable coin. Neither should we weigh every petty action to know whether it is better than another. We should in such things, in good faith and without minute consideration, choose freely as we like, so as not to weary our spirit, lose our time, or put ourselves in danger of disquietude, scruples, and superstition.

Book IX carries us on to 'The Love of Submission,' the union of our will to that Will of God that is called His 'Will of Good-Pleasure.' St. Francis defines it:

> Nothing, except sin, is done without that will of God which is called absolute, or will of good-pleasure, which no one can hinder, and which is only known to us by events: these show us, by their very happening, that God has willed and intended them (Mackey).

The Love of Submission is exercised above all in the crosses and tribulations that befall us. The first exercise of this Submission is by Resignation; it is practised with a certain effort of submission: one would wish to live, but if it be God's will that we die, we resign ourselves to it and accept it as His will. But St. Francis no doubt following the lead of St. Ignatius, goes on to a more entire submission, to indifference. 'Resignation prefers God's will before all things, yet it loves many other things besides the will of God; Indifference loves nothing except for

the love of God's will, once that will becomes manifested.' This Indifference extends to all things (c. V): health, sickness, beauty, weakness, strength; consolations or dryness in the spiritual life; actions and sufferings; even the failure of good works that we have endeavoured to carry through for God; schooling ourselves in all things to submit our own will to God's good-pleasure. It is St. Francis's great spiritual slogan, 'Surrender'—to God. He carries the thing on even a stage further, to what he calls 'the death of the will,'

> when it neither wills nor cares to desire anything at all, but gives itself over totally and without reserve to the good-pleasure of divine Providence. . . . A will perfectly resigned to God's should have no will of its own; so that the heart that is embarked in the divine good-pleasure, ought to have no other will than that of permitting itself to be conducted by the divine will.

The words that follow come as something like a shock: 'And then the heart does not as before say: *Thy will be done, not mine*, for there is now no will to be renounced' (c. XIII).

This surely will raise a demur: can there be any really higher renunciation of our own will than that of which our Lord gave the example in the Agony of Gethsemane? Has the holy Doctor here been carried over the limit by the logic of his idea? At any rate,

may not our Lord's prayer be taken by all as the standard of perfection at which to aim?

Book X brings us back to terra firma and to St. Francis's sweet reasonableness. It is an instruction on the Great Commandment to love God above all things. The perfect love of God is for heaven, not for earth. We may love God truly, and at the same time many other things together with Him.

> A man may be wholly God's, wholly his father's, wholly his mother's, wholly his prince's, wholly his friends', and so on, so that being all to each, yet he is all to all. One is in a sovereign manner given to God when he loves the divine Goodness sovereignly. And having once made this donation of himself, he is to love nothing that can remove his heart from God. Now never does any love take our heart from God, save that which is contrary unto Him. The divine Goodness is not offended by seeing in us other loves besides His, so long as we preserve for Him the reverence and submission due to Him.

Objects rightly loved with God's permission and by His command, may be loved with excess. Those who love nothing but what God would have them to love, and yet exceed in the manner of loving, love the divine Goodness above all things, yet not in all things; for they love not only according to God, but for causes, which though not contrary to God, ye

imperfections, the pains we take to keep our souls in equability :—all these things are more profitable to our souls than we can imagine, if heavenly love have the management of them.

A careful explanation is given how all our actions may be habitually ordinated to the divine love; and the whole Treatise closes with the chapter 'That Mount Calvary is the Academy of Love.'

This somewhat full analysis of St. Francis's greatest work has been made in the hope that earnest Christian men and women in the world may not suppose that this work is not for them, and so may not rest content with the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, but may be encouraged to press on and study also *The Love of God*, in the form prepared for them by the care of St. Francis's Daughters of the Visitation.

THE LETTERS

Besides the Works, a great number of letters of St. Francis have been preserved, more than two thousand, filling eleven volumes of the Annecy edition of the *Œuvres*. The great majority are spiritual letters, addressed for the most part to religious; but many are letters of advice, encouragement and spiritual direction to men, and still more to women, living in the world. A volume containing nearly two hundred 'Letters to Persons in the World,' translated by Dom Mackey from a French selection, is No. I of the

are out of Him. They love too ardently and with superfluity; still as they love only the thing which may be lawfully loved, they are not thereby debarred from such favours as even the recollections, unions, reposes of love spoken of in Books VI and VII, albeit but rarely. This is a concession very characteristic of St. Francis, that would hardly be made by certain other Masters.

Book X concludes with chapters on Zeal. Book XI brings out how Love of God holds the Sovereignty over all the virtues.

Finally, Book XII gives practical 'Counsels for the progress of the Soul in Holy Love.' The true and lawful occupations of our vocation and state of life are no real hindrance in the practice of divine love (c. IV); and then in c. VI he reverts to his favourite theme of the 'Little Virtues':

> Great works lie not always in our way, but every moment we may do little ones with excellence, that is, with great love. In the low and little works of devotion, charity is not only practised more frequently, but ordinarily more humbly too, and consequently more usefully and more holily.
>
> Those condescensions to the humours of others, that bearing with their tiresome and foolish ways, those victories over our own likes and dislikes, those renouncings of our lesser inclinations, that effort against our aversions and repugnances, that heartfelt and sweet acknowledgment of our own

'Library of St. Francis de Sales' (Burns and Oates, 1884). A Preface was supplied by Bishop Hedley, going, as always, to the root of things. It is of interest to find that forty years before Bremond he had characterised St. Francis as 'Humanist.' As relating to our special purpose the following pieces may be extracted from the Preface:

> Christianity is intended to sanctify the world, and not to abolish the world; and the world is not, and can never be, the cloister. For the generality of men of the world the true apostle is he who makes the way of perfection as easy and as smooth as it can be made without sacrificing safety. This is what St. Francis has, by the testimony of the Church herself, done better than any other writer. . . . Whilst 'devotions' abound and multiply, we are safe in taking St. Francis as our master and teacher in whatever relates to real 'devotion.'

The Bishop singled out the following piece from a letter to a man at the French Court, in fact, the son of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, as being the very spirit and essence of St. Francis's spiritual teaching:

> Imagine that you were a courtier of St. Louis. Well did the holy King like a man to be brave, courageous, generous, good-humoured, courteous, polite, candid, and refined; but he liked him to be a Christian far better. Had you been near him you would have seen him laugh amiably when there

was occasion for it, and speak out boldly when it was needful; he would have taken care that all his surroundings were noble and dignified, like a second Solomon, in order that the royal dignity might be kept up; and a moment afterwards he would have been seen serving the poor in the hospital; in a word he joined civil virtue with Christian virtue, and allied majesty with humility. The truth is, one must understand that no one is less manly because he is a Christian, or less Christian because he is a man. But to be this he must be a really good Christian—that is to say, very devout, very pious, and, if possible, a spiritual man; for, as St. Paul says, the spiritual man discerneth all things; he knows when, and in what order, and in what way to practise each different virtue as required.[1]

The 'Letters to Married Women' will be found particularly good and practical: it is characteristic that several are advices for the time of pregnancy, with simplicity, and no suggestion it is a thing not to be spoken of. Some tone down the programme of pious exercises as set forth in Book II of the *Devout Life*; for instance definitely restricting the meditation to a half-hour. Indeed sometimes, while recommending the 'Philothea' or *Devout Life* he cuts down the exercises considerably, even leaving out the

[1] See the whole letter, p. 176.

meditation altogether. A letter to a lady (p. 73), laying down a Rule of Life, may be taken as an example of his advices as applied in concrete cases. He lays down what he chiefly wants of her.

1°. Fortnightly Confession and Communion; or weekly if you feel attracted to it.

2°. Make your spiritual exercises short and fervent, so that prayer may not become a difficulty on account of its length. You should make every day the Morning Exercise marked in the *Introduction* (*Devout Life*, Bk. II, c. X); well, to make it short, you may, while dressing, thank God by ejaculatory prayer, for having preserved you that night; and then make the 2nd and 3rd points, not only while dressing, but in bed or elsewhere, without distinction of place or actions; then as soon as you can you must put yourself on your knees and make the 4th point. The same for the examen of conscience, which you can make while going to bed, provided you make the 3rd and 4th points kneeling.

He seems to take daily Mass for granted.

3°. Learn to make often ejaculations and movements of your heart towards God.

4°. Be gentle and affable to everyone, but especially at home.

5°. The alms given in your house, give yourself whenever you can.

6°. Visit very willingly the sick of your district.

7°. Read every day a page or two of some spiritual book; and on feasts a little more, which will take the place of a sermon.

8°. Continue to honour your father-in-law, because God wishes it, having given him to you as your second father in this world; and love cordially your husband, giving him with a gentle and simple goodwill, all the satisfaction you can; and be good in bearing the imperfections of all, specially those of your home.

I do not see that I have any more to say. Live, then, all joyous in God and for God, my dearest child.

Such direction will be felt to be a programme of devout life not too burdensome to be carried out in very many paths of life.

These must serve as specimens of the admirable advices to be found in these Letters to Persons in the world. But the whole body of Letters is a mine teeming with precious ore of spiritual instruction that waits to be quarried out of it and put into a shape that may be of practical use to good souls: for no one will face these volumes with their two thousand letters. And so it is a good thing that this work of picking out from the letters all the plums of St. Francis's teaching on the right ordering of life, and sorting them out into a co-ordinated body of spiritual

doctrine, is actually in hand by his Daughters of the Visitation Convent at Harrow.

ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL

A good idea of what such a work will be like may be gained from the volume already given us from the same hands, *The Spiritual Life*, culled from the voluminous works of St. Jane Frances de Chantal.[1] It will be appropriate to conclude the section on St. Francis by a word on this compilation; because St. Jane's utterances and her whole spirit are a repetition of what she heard and learned from St. Francis, so that her spiritual doctrine is a faithful reflection of his. The presentation of her teachings falls naturally in the two great divisions, 'The Virtues,' or ascetical, and 'Prayer,' or mystical. The instructions were all given to her nuns of the Visitation, and therefore are strongly coloured by the ideals and obligations of the religious life. But what she says of charity, particularly love of others, of renunciation, of submission to God's Will, and so forth, all breathe St. Francis's spirit, and are good for all. Above all is this true in the second half of the volume, 'Instructions on prayer.' In the short Preface His Eminence Cardinal Bourne says truly that

> this part will have a wider usefulness. There is a marked increase in the number of those who,

[1] Sands & Co., 1928.

within and without the unity of the Catholic Church, desire to know more about the ways of approach to God by prayer. St. Jane's instructions will bring us in all probability to that very simple way of prayer which is usually the portion of those who, in the midst of much preoccupation and many distractions, nevertheless endeavour generously to do all things in union with their Divine Master.

Indeed there is good reason for thinking that St. Francis's mind in regard to actual praying may be more truly discerned as reflected in St. Jane's utterances here brought together, than in his own formal treatises, the *Devout Life* and the *Love of God*.

VI. THE LITURGICAL REVIVAL

It will not be questioned that one of the currents running the most strongly in the life of the Catholic Church since the opening years of our twentieth century, is the recall to the Liturgy that has come with no uncertain voice from the two Popes, Pius X and Pius XI. The reason why this movement seems to find a natural place in this volume is, that the Liturgical Way is a 'Way of Christian Life,' 'old spirituality,' being now urged on 'modern men' by the highest religious authority in the Church. There is another reason. We have been mainly concerned with the respective contributions of the Old Orders to the spiritual formation and life of the Faithful at large; and differ how they may, and do, in other respects, one thing the Old Orders—the four here dealt with, and also Canons Regular and Servites—all have in common, that it is a vital part of their life to recite the canonical Office together in choir. This liturgical element differs in degree in the different Orders. By common consent it is at its greatest among Benedictines; then come Dominicans, then Franciscans, while with Carmelites the liturgical element is deliberately shorn to the utmost possible of all

external solemnity, and reduced to its bare bones. Still, the outstanding fact is that the Old Orders all do say the Office in common as an important community religious act; and this imparts to them all a certain spirit that may be called liturgical spirit, liturgical sense. And thus they can in a special way welcome the call of the Popes for a return to the older liturgical ways; and also their familiarity with living liturgical practice as an essential part of their life, makes them instruments ready at hand for propagating this religious movement among the Faithful set going by the Holy See.

THE CALL OF THE POPES

But before speaking about it, let us have before us the actual Call, and see precisely what it is that the Popes have in mind in this general call for a revival of liturgical religion.

The first voice raised was that of Pius X in the famous *Motu Proprio* of 1903 on the reform of the music used at church services. Its general purport was to condemn as unecclesiastical and irreligious the kinds of music very commonly used in Catholic churches, and in particular in Rome itself; and in regard to the plain chant, after declaring the Gregorian chant to be the authentic chant of the Roman Church, the Pope stamped with his approval the restored text of the chant made by the Solesmes Benedictines, and announced that an official authentic

edition would be issued from the Congregation of Rites for universal use throughout the Latin Church; and in 1907 this 'authentic and typical' edition of the graduale, or chant for the Mass, was published.

It is of importance that the full mind of Pius X in this drastic action should be understood. Beyond and behind all considerations of music that take up the greater part of the pronouncement of 1903, the holy Pontiff had, as might be expected, predominantly in mind the question of Religion. This stands out in the following words:

> Filled as We are with a most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish in every respect and be preserved by all the Faithful, We deem it necessary to provide before aught else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the Faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable fount, which is the taking an active part in the most holy mysteries, and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church.

The Pope's mind is made still more clear in a passage further on:

> Especially should the chant be restored to the use of the people, so that they may take a more active part in the offices, as they did in former times.

And in obedience to the Pope's orders, the Cardinal

Vicar issued to all parish priests and superiors of churches in Rome an instruction wherein was laid upon them the injunction to encourage the Faithful ' to take an active part in the sacred functions, singing the Common of the Mass (*Kyrie*, *Gloria*, etc.), as well as the psalms, the well-known liturgical hymns, and the hymns in the vulgar tongue.' And he presses that ' at vespers and complin the people should not be content to be present without taking an active part.'

The present Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, has many times and in many ways reiterated and reinforced the teaching of his predecessor. In letters of commendation to Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Paris, he speaks as an enthusiast, that ' the extended propagation of the Gregorian chant will be productive of the happiest results for true religion ' and asks : ' Is there anything which exhales the fragrance of Christian piety and fosters the Christian spirit like Gregorian chant ! '

But with full pontifical authority he spoke in 1928, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ' Motu Proprio ' of Pius X, making his own and again promulgating as his own the legislation and the ideas of Pius X : this in the Apostolic Constitution *Divini Cultus*, on the Liturgy and on fostering the Gregorian Chant and Sacred Music. We are not concerned with the musical aspects of this encyclical, only with the aspect touching on the religion of the Faithful.

And so, it is laid down that ' there is a close con-

nection between the Liturgy, the public Christian worship, and the sanctification of the Faithful.' 'The Faithful come to church in order to derive piety from its chief source, by taking an active part in the venerated mysteries and the public solemn prayers of the Church.' 'The spirit of religion has prospered where the Faithful have gained a deeper understanding of the sacred Liturgy, and have taken part with greater zest in the ceremonies of the Mass, and in the singing of the psalms and public prayers.' Finally:

> In order that the Faithful may more actively participate in divine worship, let them be made once more to sing the Gregorian chant, so far as it belongs to them to take part in it. It is most important that when the Faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies, or when pious sodalities take part with the clergy in a procession, they should not be merely detached and silent spectators, but filled with a deep sense of the beauty of the liturgy, they should sing alternately with the clergy or the choir, as it is prescribed. If this is done, then it will no longer happen that the people either make no answer at all to the public prayers—whether in the language of the liturgy or in the vernacular—or at best utter the responses in a low and subdued murmur.

There can be no mistaking the meaning, so far as

the faithful laity are affected, of the pronouncements of the two Popes: the laity are to be encouraged, urged, to join with their voices in public prayers, in liturgical services, above all, in the Liturgy in fullest sense, the solemn celebration of High Mass; and hereby will be promoted true religion, piety, true Christian spirit, and the sanctification of the Christian people. These voices come not merely as a call, but as a recall, a renovation of something that once existed and has all but fallen out.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRAYER

The issue raised is the relation between public and private prayer. There is no real antagonism. By precept and by practice our Lord taught us to exercise both. But there has been at different times a different emphasis laid on either kind of prayer. Evidently the possibility of printed prayer-books tended to make a difference. In the times when books were turned out one by one, and so were rare and costly, and a book a luxury, and when the great crowd of layfolk could not read, men depended for their religious formation mainly on sight and hearing, on what they saw and heard at the church services, at the elaborate and dramatic liturgical functions, at processions, even at miracle plays. Thus throughout the Middle Ages the Faithful were, as result of the facts of existence, thrown for the most part on to

the public prayers of the Church as the exercise of religion.

In monasteries, and also in cathedrals and collegiate churches, the liturgical services were celebrated with much elaboration and great pomp of ceremonial, the Offices and Masses being chanted daily; and in parish churches on Sundays not only was the Mass sung, but Vespers or Evensong; and it was the recognised Sunday and holiday obligation of the Faithful to take part not only at the Mass, but at Vespers too.

Private prayers of course were said, and copies of prayer-books of various kinds have come down to us; but most of them are of a liturgical character, made up of devotional offices and psalms, the penitential and gradual psalms, and the offices of the Blessed Virgin and of the Dead. The English Prymers are an example of such vernacular prayer-books. It will be remembered that in both Franciscan and Dominican Third Orders the office of the Blessed Virgin was assumed to be the daily devotion of Tertiaries.

Thus up to the invention of printing the public prayers of the liturgical services of Mass and Vespers, joined in and sung by the people, formed the staple of the religious exercises of the Faithful.

But with the invention of printing and consequent multiplication of little books, the reading public rapidly increased, and it was possible to supply ever

widening circles with printed prayer-books adapted for private prayer. Through the facilities in providing books, and the increasing number of those that could use them, the idea of 'meditation' was popularised in wide circles in a way that was new. The idea of such meditation had been growing ever since the time that Anselm and Bonaventure wrote their meditations for the pious; and there had been a steady growth in the providing of such books of meditations, and in the making them more and more methodical; till by the beginning of the sixteenth century such systematic meditation existed in many forms, to receive at St. Ignatius's hands the form that has been accepted as the highest development of such meditation.[1]

Thus throughout the Renaissance period there was running a current of reaction from the old liturgical social kind of popular religion towards a more individualistic personal kind of religion, a move greatly accelerated by the invention of printing and easy multiplication of books; and this led to a shifting of the centre of gravity of the spiritual life from the common prayer of the liturgy to the cultivation of private mental prayer. And all the subjectivity of modern spirituality, with its self-introspection, its analysis of motives, its methods of

[1] On the topics thus summarily despatched, the sections in Vernet's *Medieval Spirituality* on 'Meditation' and 'Prayer' (pp. 142 and 150) give an interesting detailed sketch, bringing out the outstanding names and facts.

meditation, its frequent minute examinations of conscience, its marking progress in virtue, its conscious advancement in perfection, even its daily charts of defects and acts of mortification and virtue, and its preference of private over common prayer—it all makes clear the meaning of the distinction that has been drawn between anthropocentric or subjective and theocentric or objective kinds of spirituality. And though there is no incompatibility, no reason why these two kinds of prayer should not go on alongside of one another, whether in the personal religion of the individual or in the common religious life of the community, as a fact the propagation of the more subjective type, and the concentration on one's own spiritual life, have widely taken the shape of a reaction from the more objective liturgical and quasi-liturgical kinds of prayer. Needless to say, the harmonious blending of the two great aspects of religion, the worship of God and the endeavour for personal Christian perfection, is the fullest and most healthy kind of spiritual life for all Christians. And so the call of the Popes for a return to the liturgy is by no means a call to give up or curtail the practices of personal piety: Pius XI is himself the proof, in that he has with equal insistence urged the return to the liturgy and the making of retreats according to the lines of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. The Call is to a well-balanced spiritual life wherein both elements, theocentric and anthropocentric,

objective and subjective, shall play their full and proper part, not interfering with, yea, greatly helping each other.

In response to this call, and in the work of restoration of liturgical spirit and practice, it is evident that the Old Orders, that have kept alive their strong liturgical life through modern times and tendencies, will have an advantage and a power beyond that of others, in that public liturgical prayer has at all times been for them central in their life, of the very nature of their institute.

VOCAL PRAYER

Before speaking of the liturgy and the participation in it by the Faithful, there is a point that needs more elucidation. The liturgy is 'vocal' prayer, meditation is 'mental' prayer.

It is to be noted that the commonly accepted division of prayer into vocal and mental is in reality a cross division. For prayer that is only vocal—a mere uttering of words—and not at least virtually, or in intention and desire, also mental, could not properly be called prayer. And on the other hand, the mind in its present state of union with body, is so circumstanced that only with difficulty does it operate for any length of time without the use of words, if not formed by the lips, at any rate articulated mentally. But St. Francis's ejaculation, repeated through the livelong night, 'Deus meus et omnia,' though verbal,

would not be called vocal prayer; nor would similar informal half-uttered aspirations or ejaculations, as the Psalmist's 'Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus in æternum.' It is true that many may, and do, experience periods of varying length of inarticulate prayer, certainly in higher states of prayer: still it is a psychological fact that any prolonged working of mind or soul without words at least thought mentally, is as difficult as working without concepts or phantasmata.

Thus the division of prayer into vocal and mental is not logical or strictly correct. Still it is useful, if it be agreed that by vocal prayer is meant set fixed formulas: thus the prayers of the Mass are vocal prayers, so are the divine Office, the rosary, psalms, hymns, litanies, set prayers publicly or privately said, as the Acts of Faith Hope and Charity, and other such acts, as in the prayer-books before and after Communion. And mental prayer is that which is purely mental, without words; or if it be with words, at least spontaneously, freely, without fixed forms, with oft-repeated simple ejaculations.

It will be of use to point out what is surely a grave though frequent misconception.

It is customary for those who deal with the science and practice of prayer to schedule its grades or stages in ascending scale, ranging vocal prayer at the bottom of the scale. This is, in a way, natural, because vocal prayer is the first kind of prayer we learn as children,

and it is the simplest and easiest, within reach of all, and the only kind ever used by many, indeed by most souls. But surely it is wrong theory to rank vocal prayer as of its nature the lowest kind of prayer; as does, for instance, among many others, the late Mgt. Farges, who in his book *The Ordinary Ways of the Spiritual Life*, in classifying the different kinds and degrees of prayer according to their dignity and perfection, places vocal prayer at the bottom, 'on the lowest rung of the ladder.' After all, when the Apostles asked our Lord to teach them to pray (*Lk.* xi, 1), He did not give them any method of mental prayer, but the 'Our Father,' a vocal prayer, taken in all Christian tradition not as of the lowest grade of prayer, but as the most sublime of all. And in the glimpses given us in Holy Writ, both Old Testament and New, the worship of God by angels and saints in heaven is represented as vocal prayer (*Is.* vi and *Apoc.*).

Vocal prayer is not merely the first kind of prayer we all use; it goes on throughout life to the end, and it grows in spirituality and power progressively with the soul's growth in holiness; so that it is the clear teaching of such accredited masters as Cassian, Fr. Baker, and above all, St. Teresa, who vouches for her own experience, that vocal prayer may and does bring souls to even the highest contemplation and union.

Thus vocal prayer and mental prayer are not as

successive rungs of a single ladder, but are, so to say, two ladders alongside of each other, which we mount simultaneously, a foot on the rungs of each. They are parallel paths, each of which may bring us to union with God; and he will scale the heights most surely who best uses both of them.

It follows that it would be a deplorable mistake, especially in priests, to look on vocal prayer as an inferior kind of prayer to mental, and thereby to depreciate and undervalue the Breviary. It is vocal prayer only that Holy Church makes use of in her worship and ministrations, or imposes as of obligation on her children; and it is vocal prayer that she puts into the mouth of her priests straightway on leaving the altar, as the first thanksgiving after Mass.

THE CANONICAL OFFICE

The Liturgy is vocal prayer; and in view of the urgent call to the Faithful to take once again an active part in liturgical services, it behoves us to speak of the Mass, the liturgical Act by excellence, something more than prayer; of this anon: but here of the divine Office, which comes next to the Mass in dignity among liturgical services. Seeing that the Faithful are exhorted to join in the singing of the psalms at Vespers or Complin; and also seeing the place that the divine Office holds in the life of all priests and of very many nuns, as their principal vocal prayer, it

will be in place to offer some simple thoughts upon it.

One of St. Benedict's names for the Office is 'the Praises of the Creator.' To praise God and to worship the Creator is the first and most elementary duty of a creature—of every creature, rational, animate, inanimate. And all creation does, according to its nature, praise God. 'The heavens are telling the glory of God'; 'The morning stars praise God (*al.* sang) together.' And this is the burden of the great canticle *Benedicite*, which the Church gives her priests as their first thanksgiving after offering the holy Sacrifice: Bless ye the Lord all the works of the Lord, sun and moon and stars, and all the great elemental forces of nature—heat and cold, wind and rain, frost and snow, light and darkness, thunder and clouds; then the earth, mountains and hills, all vegetation, seas and rivers and all the living things in them, birds and beasts and cattle—all are called on to bless the Lord. It is the same refrain in the great psalm of Lauds, 'Praise ye the Lord from the heavens' (148). Thus there is ever playing throughout the Universe a mighty concert of nature—the music of the spheres—ever rising in a chorus of praise to the Creator. St. John of the Cross in more than one place seems to say that in his highest spiritual elevations he had become aware of this concert of nature and had entered into contact with it:

In this silence and tranquillity the soul discerns a

> marvellous arrangement and disposition of God's wisdom in the diversities of His creatures and operations. All these, and each of them, by a voice peculiar to itself, proclaims what there is in itself of God, so as to form a concert of sublimest melody, transcending all the harmonies of the world. . . . In this tranquil contemplation the soul perceives every creature, highest and lowest, magnifying God in its own way. Thus all these voices together unite in one strain of praise of God's greatness, wisdom, and marvellous knowledge.[1]

Thus it is no mere poetic fancy that there is ever going on the great Concert of Nature, the cosmic chorus of praise of the Creator, every creature taking part according to its kind. It is like one of the great choruses in an Oratorio, like the 'Messiah': the instruments play their part the best they can in the mighty volume of sound that goes up in praise to God; but the human voice has to make the praise articulate, a reasonable service. So it is with the general concert of the Universe: it is left to God's rational creatures, angels and men, to voice the mute praise of all inanimate nature and make it rational and articulate.

But vast crowds of mankind—the great majority—do not realise their duty, do not fulfil it; and of those

[1] For the full passages see *Western Mysticism*, 'Epilogue,' *fin.*

who do recognise it, their lives and occupations are such that they can fulfil only in meagre measure this duty of worship and praise. And so Holy Church steps in and takes on herself the function of representing all her children, all mankind, in satisfying, in the name of all, this primary duty of all creatures. Thus Abbot Guéranger wrote a tract, *The Church the Society of Divine Praise;* as a definition of the Church of God of course inadequate, but an aspect true as far as it goes. And the Church in turn entrusts to her priests and to her religious the duty of representing her, and the whole human race, and all the material creation, in the work of public official praise and worship. Not to speak as yet of the Holy Mass, this is what the Canonical Office is; and this is the idea that should be uppermost in the mind of priests when they take up their breviary, and in the mind of religious when they go to choir, and of the Faithful when they take part in the public functions of the Church—the Praise of God.

And this is the general answer to the difficulties and dissatisfactions sometimes heard from priests in regard to the divine Office: the distractions that invade them, the mechanical repeating of psalms and hymns without thought or realisation of what we are saying, or even that we are praying at all; we find ourselves at the end of psalm after psalm without having made our own their wonderful words of praise and prayer. And we are discouraged, and

perhaps ask ourselves if we have got any good out of a recitation so distracted, so heartless.

In this we are applying a wrong criterion. We forget that the purpose of the Canonical Office is in the first line the public praise and worship of God, and only in the second line our personal devotion and edification. No doubt the more of this latter we reap, the more reasonable and worthy will our praise and worship be. Still, the priest who takes up his breviary, the religious who goes to choir, with the intention of carrying out the mind of the Church, and offering to God in her behalf the public praise and worship that are His due, and who does not wilfully yield to distractions, does exercise the great act of worship, even though he be not aware of any spiritual gain to himself. This principle may encourage us when we think we derive no benefit to our personal spiritual life from our Office: it is the praise and worship of God, and not our own betterment, that matters most.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

The central and supreme Fact in the history of the world was the Death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. By it were the sins of the world taken away, mankind redeemed, and to all men given the power of becoming sons of God, of entering on the inheritance forfeited by our First Parents, and of being

restored to the supernatural state they had lost. And that it was precisely by the shedding of our Lord's Blood on Calvary that this work of Redemption was effected, stands out as axiomatic for the New Testament writers in many clear texts of St. Paul, St. John, St. Peter. Our Lord's Death was the One great Sacrifice, the Sacrifice of the Cross, the supreme Act of worship of God and of atonement for sin.

When we think of the Mass our Catholic Faith tells us that its essential nature is that it is a Sacrifice truly propitiatory, 'the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, . . . one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross' (so the English Catholic Penny Catechism); and of the four ends for which Mass is offered, the first and principal is worship, 'to give supreme honour and glory to God.' Thus of all acts of worship the Mass is the greatest and the most perfect since Christ's Death on Calvary, of which it is the memorial; and no mere memorial, but the renewal, 'one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross.' That the Mass is a true Sacrifice is one of the crucial points of difference of the Catholic Faith from Protestantism. And all Catholics realise this truth, the Mass being commonly spoken of as 'the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.'

But also the Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament—'the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine,' to be worshipped with divine worship, and partaken of by the Faithful

in Holy Communion. Though this was firmly held by all Christians from the beginning, the cultus of the Blessed Sacrament and the practices of Eucharistic worship, and the place of Eucharistic devotion in the personal spiritual life of the Faithful, have all undergone a great growth and development in the Western Church since the Middle Ages, as was commented on in the Franciscan chapter, when speaking of St. Francis's love of the Blessed Sacrament. And the growth of devotion to the Holy Eucharist as Sacrament, as Body of Christ, and the predominant thought of the abiding Real Presence on the Altar, has tended to make the sacramental idea uppermost in the mind of the Faithful and in a way to throw into the background the sacrificial idea of the Mass, devotionally, if not theologically. As the object of their devotion the Faithful want the Blessed Sacrament for Holy Communion, for Benediction, for Processions; they want the Reserved Sacrament for private prayer before the Tabernacle; and unconsciously they may come to look on the Mass primarily as the means of giving them the Blessed Sacrament. Of course they do know quite well from their catechism that it is a Sacrifice: it is matter of emphasis.

The difference appears in the ways in which good people hear Mass.

In olden times, before there were prayer-books, and before the generality of people could read them, the Faithful probably assisted at Mass simply attend-

ing to what was being done, to the offering of the Sacrifice, just feeling, like St. Peter at the Transfiguration, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here!' and no doubt saying what simple prayers they knew by heart, 'Pater' and 'Ave'; but attending to the Action of the Mass, the Sacrifice. The introduction of prayer-books brought about a change in the manner of assisting at Mass; and the development of meditation and mental prayer, and emphasis on private personal prayer, all told. Methods of hearing Mass were given in the prayer-books, some adhering in structure and idea to the Mass itself—such the Prayers at Mass in Challoner's old 'Garden of the Soul'—but often just private devotions out of all special relation to the Mass; or the Rosary might be said; or the time passed in purely mental prayer. Prayer, of course, is always good; the only rule of universal application is, when free, to use the way of praying that enables us to pray the best, and brings us closest to God. So assisting at Mass, however we may be praying, is always a great and a holy act. But the tendencies just noted mean a substitution of private prayer for the public prayer of the Church at Mass; and as a consequence, the sense that we are assisting at the Sacrifice is liable to pass out of the field of consciousness, into the region now spoken of by psychologists as the sub-conscious mind.

What is meant may be illustrated from St. Francis of Sales, *The Devout Life*, Bk. II, c. xiv, 'Of the Holy

Mass and how we ought to hear it.' After laying down in eloquent terms that

> The sun of spiritual exercises is the most holy, sacred, and supreme Sacrifice and Sacrament of the Mass, the centre of Christian religion, the heart of devotion, the soul of piety,

the holy Doctor exhorts Philothea to hear Mass every day, and sketches a manner of hearing Mass that is based on the successive parts of the Mass; in particular during the Canon,

> Apply your heart to the mysteries of the Death and Passion of our Redeemer, which are actually and essentially represented in this holy Sacrifice, which together with the priest and the rest of the people, you will offer to God the Father, for His honour and for your salvation.

Mass so heard is in union with the Sacrifice. But the final paragraph gives this advice:

> If during the Mass you wish to meditate upon the mysteries that you are taking in order day by day, there is no need for you to give them up in order to follow these particular actions; but it will suffice if, at the beginning of Mass, you direct your intention to adore and offer up this holy Sacrifice by means of your meditation and prayer, since in every meditation the aforesaid actions are found, either expressly or tacitly and virtually.

The extreme expression of the modern subjective mind on the Mass that has come to my notice is that of the late Mgr. Farges in the book already mentioned, *Ordinary Ways of the Spiritual Life*, where the Mass is definitely treated as 'Preparation for Holy Communion.' Of course, the Faithful are often told that to follow the Mass in the Missal, reciting the Canon with the priest, is the best, because the Church's, preparation for Communion. But that is not what he means; he advises against the use of the Missal by the laity, because the finding the places will prove distractive. Of course, he knew well the theology of the Mass as Sacrifice; but that is for the priest; for the laity the dominant idea is Communion.

We currently speak of 'hearing Mass,' as if it were the act of the priest, and the congregation only are audience, listening. But that would be a sadly inadequate idea. The Faithful assist at Mass, and it is their act as well as the priest's; they also offer the Sacrifice. They are reminded of this when the priest before the Canon turns to them and says 'Orate fratres'—'pray that my and your Sacrifice may be acceptable.' And this great truth really stands out still more clearly in the Canon itself. For where in our actual Canon is said in the Memento of the living: 'Memento Domine . . . omnium circumstantium . . . pro quibus tibi offerimus, vel qui tibi offerunt, hoc sacrificium laudis,' the clause 'pro quibus tibi offerimus vel' is absent from the original

text of the Gregorian Sacramentary, being a later gloss, though an early one. So that the authentic Canon of St. Gregory's Sacramentary says: 'Remember, O Lord, all those who stand around, who offer to Thee this sacrifice of praise,'[1] showing that the true Roman idea was, and is, that the congregation themselves, each one, are offering to God the Sacrifice—'a royal priesthood,' as St. Peter calls all Christians.

The chapter of the Council of Trent on the Canon of the Mass has a refrain of this idea: 'Nought is contained in it but what is in the highest degree redolent of a certain holiness and piety, and will raise to God the minds of the offerers—mentes offerentium'; implying that all present are offering the Sacrifice; and also that the Canon itself is a prayer calculated in the highest degree to stir up piety.

It will not be doubted that the wish to restore this idea of the Mass as the Church's great social act of worship, prompted the strongly urged call of the two Popes, that the Faithful, the congregation, should take an active part in the Holy Mysteries.

LITURGICAL WAY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

The response of the Catholic World to the Call of the Popes has taken different shapes in different countries. In Belgium and the Catholic regions of Ger-

[1] Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, pp. 83, 95.

many it has called forth a Liturgical Movement, a Liturgical Campaign it might almost be called. Certain Benedictine Abbeys have put themselves at the head of this movement, and a widespread active propaganda for a reassertion of the more liturgical practices of former times, in reaction against the individualism of modern devotional piety, has been running its course. Naturally the movement was looked at rather askance in quarters identified with modern methods, and criticisms and protests were made in the Catholic religious press against the methods of propaganda being pursued, as pushing the thing to extremes, beyond what is intended by the Papal pronouncements. The thing was taken to Rome and laid before the Holy Father himself, with the result that a formal letter of approval was obtained, which blessed the liturgical movement and its aims. This letter was printed in the German Catholic press, and the controversy ceased.

This shows that the movement of return to the liturgy may no longer be looked on as the fad of enthusiasts: it has behind it the Living Voice of the present Holy Father, proclaiming that the imbuing of the Faithful with 'the spirit of the liturgy' will be along with spiritual Retreats, the most potent mean of raising the level of spiritual life and promoti true religion in the world.

With us in England though there has b definite movement as that just spoken o

been manifested in various ways a response to the Call of the Popes; and this has taken on the colour of a revived interest in and use of the liturgical modes of prayer.

In the first place, there has been a marked tendency of the Faithful to revert to the use of the Missal as the prayer-book for Mass. This is evidenced by the great output of Missals for the laity—from full Missals with Latin and English throughout, enriched with liturgical and historical annotations, down to the Catholic Truth Society's *Simple Missal*, giving in English just the Sunday Masses. The great number of such Missals, of all kinds and costs, produced in healthy competition by all the Catholic publishing firms, is an earnest of the growing popularity and appreciation of the Missal as the best Mass-book of all, those who use it finding the truth of the words of Trent just cited, that the Canon is redolent of holiness and piety, and has a special power of raising the mind to God. Such use of the Missal is the surest and most quiet way of bringing about the return of the laity to the idea of praying with the priest the prayers of the Church, and to the realisation that they are, each one, offering the Holy Sacrifice in union with the priest, and so taking that active part in the sacred Mysteries desired by the Popes. It seems right to name here the ran liturgist, Abbot Cabrol, who has placed his ning at the service of the laity in his editions of Missal, and of the other great services of the

Church, as those of Holy Week. And his book, *Liturgical Prayer*, translated by the Benedictine Dames of Stanbrook, deserves special mention (Burns, Oates and Washbourne).

But the special appeal in the Calls of the Popes is that the Faithful layfolk be not content to be detached silent onlookers or mere hearers of the sacred function, but should use their voices and join in the singing of the services. This is in practice a more troublesome proposition, to induce middle-aged people 'who can't sing,' to trust the sound of their own voices in joining in with the congregation even in English hymns. However, that it is quite impracticable to get the people singing, is a counsel of despair, refuted by the results at times obtained in even unlikely conditions, as of a small country parish, where the priest has enthusiasm and is what is called 'a live wire.' In such conditions it has proved possible to have the Proper of the Mass, perhaps barring gradual and alleluia, sung to the Vatican chant correctly by a village choir, and to get the Common sung together by the people at large; also to get Complin, yea, even Vespers, on the Sundays quite well carried through as congregational services, all as the Popes would wish. And when this has been achieved, the liturgy has always shown its power in capturing the interest and enthusiasm of the people.

In regard to the Popes' ideas that *Kyrie* and G[loria] be sung by the people in unison, an experien[ce]

choirmaster, an enthusiastic and very competent promoter of the movement in England, said to me that in most parishes a beginning can be made in getting the congregation to sing the Asperges, the Creed, and the Responses at the Preface and throughout the Mass; but the *Kyrie*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus*, except the very simplest, can hardly be sung congregationally as yet; the Proper can only be sung by choirs who can sing, and who can be got together for practices. In regard to the psalms, and the Popes' wish that the alternate verses at Vespers or Complin be sung by the congregation, this result has been achieved successfully in certain schools and colleges where the psalms are chanted well and impressively by large bodies of boys' voices; but here again, practices are essential. But at Benediction it is easy and very usual for the whole congregation to join in singing the *O Salutaris* and *Tantum ergo*, and the litany or hymn, provided the tunes are well known to the people, and not too musical. The Holy Father's wish goes beyond the strictly liturgical offices, to popular vernacular devotions, that the people sing the English hymns and speak up in answering the prayers, so that it may 'no longer happen that the people either make no answer at all to the public prayers, be they Latin or Vernacular, or at best utter the responses in a low and subdued murmur.' In short the Call is to encourage the Faithful in every way to take part with heart, and also with voice, in all public services of the

Church, so that they may be 'imbued with the spirit of the liturgy.'

In England the movement in response to the Call is making progress in divers measures in the different dioceses; and also in Ireland a movement is afoot for introducing the use of the Gregorian chant and cultivating the liturgical spirit. For reasons of history easy to understand, the liturgy had in Ireland sunk to the level of the absolutely essential: in great measure no doubt the result of the long period of repression under the penal laws, but also perhaps in some measure owing to reasons of racial religious temperament. The desire of the Popes that the Faithful join in singing and celebrating the services will probably prove difficult in realisation. Many years ago one of the most popular Dublin churches tried to introduce congregational singing of English hymns, with the result, so one of the priests of the church told me, that a friend asked him: 'Is it true what we hear, that you're turning Protestant at Clarendon Street, singing hymns?' However, things have moved on a good bit since then, and the success that has attended the movement for spreading the Gregorian chant will probably show triumphantly at the coming Eucharistic Congress that the new spirit is abroad in Ireland.

In England the Society of St. Gregory has been set going, and is vigorously pursuing many activities, and in some dioceses the Bishop has put himself energetically at the head of the movement.

A difficulty arises sometimes on the side of the choirmasters, who, as musicians, desiderate a perfectly artistic execution of the chant. Such musical perfection can be attained in the Proper of the Mass rendered by more or less expert choirs, who can give the care and time that is needed to secure such finish and perfection. But if congregational singing is to come in, according to the clearly manifested mind and instructions of the Popes, the idea of any such perfection must frankly be abandoned in the portions of the liturgy or other services sung by the people at large. All that can be hoped for is a fairly correct singing of familiar tunes, mere shouting being restrained: though when a crowd is singing together, all are apt to be carried away by the enthusiasm of the crowd-spirit and to let the voices go in loudness.

If we are to believe the Apocalypse, choirmasters must be prepared for a mighty noise in heaven, where the Voice of the hundred and forty-four thousand singing the new song before the throne, was 'as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder' (*Apoc.* xiv).

The thing on earth most like to this that I have experienced was the great *Te Deum* in St. Peter's, in thanksgiving for the recovery of Pius X from death's door in 1913. The great basilica was filled with a congregation estimated at over twenty thousand, and the alternate verses of the *Te Deum* were sung with hearts overflowing by this great throng, the

different variations of the chant—Roman, Vatican, Ratisbon, Mechlin, others—as each one knew it best, mingling together somehow in the vast spaces of St. Peter's, and surely going up to heaven in some perfectly harmonised concert to the Throne of God. While for us, who were taking part in it on earth, certainly for me, it was impressive, thrilling, inspiring, uplifting—a religious experience that still stands out alone of its kind.

Certainly it is matter of religion that every effort be made, every care taken, to make the public worship of God the most perfect, the most beautiful, the most dignified that can be, in all its aspects: music, ceremonial, vestments, vessels, decoration, architecture, everything good, rich as we can make it, each according to its kind. But there are relativities in the standard of perfection, say in finished choir chant and in congregational singing. And religion lies, on the one side, not in the actual perfection of art that is secured, but in the pains taken, and the devotion and love given to securing the beauty of God's worship and service; and on the other, in the personal devotion of the worshippers. Art and religion are not necessarily connected. The ideal would be good art and good religion; but it is possible to have good religion with poor art, or poor religion with good art. For religion what matters most lies essentially in the hearts and souls of the worshippers: 'The Kingdom of God is within you.'

However, the relations of art and religion is a big and a difficult subject, whether in regard to music, or to hymns, or pictures, or what not. And so we may leave it.

AN OBJECT LESSON

But as conclusion to this chapter on the Liturgical Revival as set on foot by Popes Pius X and Pius XI, I hope I may be allowed to round it off by reproducing thoughts I uttered many years ago on this range of questions that must be occupying many minds.

To the *Downside Review* I contributed in July, 1895, a short article, 'The Holy Week Services in a Country Church,' the purpose being to show, by appeal to fact, what can be done in a small country parish. It may now be said that the church in question was that of Beccles in Suffolk. The Catholic mission there had been started six years before, out of nothing it may be said, by Fr. Edmund Ford, afterwards first Abbot of Downside; he had been recalled to Downside in 1894 to be Prior, and he had left the mission a very living thing, with a congregation of a hundred and fifty, more than half being converts of his own making. He was all his life an enthusiastic promoter of congregational singing, whether in the liturgy or in English services and hymns; and he was a good musician to boot. So when his successor obtained my services for the first Holy Week after Fr. Ford had left, 1895, I was able to see what an energetic

priest, who had inspired his people with a love of the services of the Church, had been able to secure.

After a reference to a meeting of the old Guild of St. Gregory and St. Luke, at which the discussion had turned on the possibility and desirability of the liturgical services of the Church in smaller parishes, with special reference to the Holy Week Services, the article goes on :

While the subject was fresh in my mind, I received an invitation to go and help during Holy Week at a small mission in a country town (Beccles), where I knew it was the custom to have these functions with all the fulness and solemnity possible. As a contribution to the question of fact, whether it be possible to carry out the services fully in such churches, and whether the Faithful will attend them, I propose to make a simple statement of what took place, without entering at all on any discussion of questions of principle.

I found that another priest had been secured besides myself; so that we were three priests, and were able to have a High Mass, with deacon and sub-deacon on the last three days. The offices of master of ceremonies, cantors, etc., were filled by the laymen of the congregation; and everything, both music and ritual, had been carefully prepared. On Maundy Thursday the Morning Office, both Mass and Procession, was sung in full. On Good Friday the Passion was solemnly chanted, also the *Impro-*

peria during the Creeping to the Cross, and all else was duly gone through. On Holy Saturday the Blessing of the Paschal Candle was sung and the Litanies (there was no Font in the church); at Mass we had the grand tones and the *Alleluia*, of course, and at the end the Vespers were sung with great spirit, all present in the church joining in. Each evening we had *Tenebræ*. Some of the laymen of the congregation were in the chancel in cassock and surplice, and with five or six on each side, and some help from the body of the church, the thing was really very well done. The Lamentations were sung, the rest of Matins was recited, but Lauds were sung in full. Here I feel sure the question must be rising to the lips of some sceptical reader: 'And, pray, how many were present at the *Tenebræ?*'

Before answering this question, a protest must be made. Surely the Services of Holy Church are not to be judged by the same standard as entertainments. Surely the first consideration is not how they 'draw.' Surely the primary purpose of these solemn functions is the worship and honour of God, rather than the spiritual benefit of man. Of course, the two things go together; but in former times the thought uppermost in men's minds was the service and worship of God; whereas nowadays the tendency is to aim more directly at our own personal 'advancement in perfection.' The old view was centred almost wholly on God; the modern thinks more of self-improve-

ment—of course in relation to God and for His sake. The two things (God's service and our own perfection) are correlative, and indeed are only different ways of looking at the same thing and attaining the same object; but the difference must necessarily affect our attitude in regard to the solemn services of the Church. The modern spirit is apt to prefer a Low Mass to a High, 'because one can say one's prayers more easily'; in the Ages of Faith men took delight, above all things, in grand functions, with stately ceremonial and all external pomp and splendour, believing that, as in the case of monarchs of this world, so in that of the King of kings, we thus, in the best manner at our disposal, make public manifestation of our worship and loyalty to Him, and our desire to honour and praise Him to the utmost of our power. To put it in short: the older idea of worship is objective, the more modern is subjective. Now our personal betterment is amply provided for by meditations, retreats, confraternities, and the other appliances of modern spirituality, all excellent things; what seems to many people [and apparently now to the Popes] to be a pity, is that these exercises should supplant active participation of the Faithful in the liturgical services of the Church, which aim directly at the worship and praise and glory of God, and are true religion no less than the private exercisings of modern spirituality.

To come back from this digression to the question

that set us a-thinking :—'How many came to *Tenebræ?*' Well, the attendance was good on all three nights ; including those in the chancel it ranged from forty to sixty. This may even be called a large attendance, considering that the whole congregation numbered only a hundred and fifty, and that few belonged to the leisured classes ; and to stop the mouths of cynics, be it stated that the smallest muster was not on the third night but on the second. The remarkable thing, and the really hopeful feature, was that many more came to *Tenebræ* than on any previous occasions. There were good congregations at the Morning Offices too, the church being full on Good Friday.

I was much pleased with the experience, and interested too ; for it must have been in some such way that the Holy Week Services were carried out in many a country parish church of Catholic England. The result seemed fully to bear out the contention of those who hold that some enterprise on the part of the priest in developing the fund of liturgical sense that is latent in every congregation, in organising the services and instructing the people in their meaning, awakening their interest and getting them to take part in the functions, would make it possible in many churches to carry out the services adequately, and even with solemnity ; and that when this is done the Faithful will flock to them with joy and spiritual profit and enhanced religious experience.

[The following thoughts were called forth by the

circumstances of the country parish in question, and would be fully applicable only in similar small country parishes; under larger conditions there would of course be a choir. However,—]

I cannot help thinking that the secret of the success in this church lay in the fact that there was no 'choir.' No music was attempted at Mass except the simplest plain chant; the music was circulated on leaflets throughout the congregation; everyone knew the Mass by heart; everyone sang; no one was indispensable. A connoisseur, I daresay, would not pronounce the result high-class music. But the people flocked to church and took part in *Kyrie* and *Gloria* and *Credo* and *Sanctus* and *Agnus* with spirit and gladness; and it was exhilarating to hear the body of voices arising from the whole congregation together in praise of God. It was Religion.

I hold a theory that, probably, the laws of harmony in heaven are not the same as those on earth, and that it is not always the finest music that sounds most sweetly before the Throne of God.

VII. CONTEMPLATION

THERE is another feature of the 'Old Spirituality' as presented in common by the Old Orders; namely, that they hold out 'Contemplation' as the objective of a spiritual life earnestly lived, a thing open to all devout souls in all conditions of life, whose endeavour it is to live a life of union with God by loving and serving Him faithfully according to the duties and opportunities of their state of life; a legitimate and proper object of desire, and one not infrequently attained to by good souls living a devout Christian life in what circumstances of life soever. That this was the traditional idea throughout the Christian Church up to the sixteenth century, was demonstrated with unanswerable force by Canon Saudreau in a series of works.[1] He showed also how various influences since the Reformation period tended to change what had been the long accepted tradition of the Christian Church, by identifying contemplation with the very highest spiritual experiences in prayer; nay, with such experiences as visions, auditions, raptures, and other still more dubious psycho-

[1] I may refer to my book, *Western Mysticism*, where in various places, especially in the 'Afterthoughts' to the 2nd edition, the question is handled.

physical phenomena; thus placing contemplation on a pedestal, a thing to be found now and then in Carmelite or Poor Clare Convents, but out of reach of ordinary devout Christians; to be wondered at from afar and admired; but a thing to desire which would be presumption and dangerous folly, except for the few recipients of a special and very rare call from God.

CONTEMPLATION OPEN TO ALL

That the idea of the Old Spirituality, as represented by the Old Orders, was different from this, in that they held out contemplation as a legitimate practical possibility for good souls in general, could easily be shown. For instance, Fr. Cuthbert, the well-known English Capuchin, speaks the mind not only of Franciscans but of the Old Orders in general, in the Introduction he has quite recently written for the Stanbrook translation of Fray Francisco de Osuna's *Spiritual Alphabet*:[1] it is so good in itself, and so much to the point, that I make no apology for the following catena of its sayings, in the hope that readers may be encouraged to go to the book to read the Introduction as a whole, and perhaps even try Osuna himself:

> It is surprising how little attention is given to the acquiring of the habit of contemplative prayer amongst those who aspire to something

[1] Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1931; see above, p. 68.

more than a mere servile obedience to the laws of God and of the Church. Commonly contemplative prayer is regarded as the prayer of the select few; a domain into which it would be presumptuous for the ordinary Christian to seek admittance. Yet as a matter of fact most people have an aptitude for contemplative prayer, but fail to develop it, either from laziness, or because of lack of encouragement or direction on the part of those to whom they look for guidance. . . . Contemplative prayer is not the exclusive possession of contemplative religious communities. It belongs of right to the whole body of the Church, to the laity as well as the clergy and the religious Orders; and it is as it permeates all ranks and states in the general body of the Faithful, that the spirituality of the Catholic body is developed and strengthened. [He deplores] the deterrents which hold back the ordinary sane-minded religious man from even considering contemplative prayer as within the purview of practical life. . . . Whilst contemplative prayer is the right of the many, only comparatively few are called to be 'mystics' in the more exclusive sense; not all men, the masters teach, are capable of the higher flights to which the rarer sorts attain. . . . The merit of Fray Osuna's *Alphabet* is that it addresses itself to the beginner and keeps in view the special need of the beginner. He starts out with the principle that

> contemplative prayer is for the many, not for the few; and he is at pains to encourage the normal good Catholic to practise it, warning him not to be put off by the class of writers and spiritual directors who so fence off the prayer of contemplation with warnings and danger signals, as to discourage all but the most hardy and adventurous spirits.

This is excellently said—so excellently that it may be hoped to lead some to read the whole statement as set out in the Introduction. And lest it should be supposed that these are modern ideas, being foisted on this Franciscan of the first years of the sixteenth century, the words of the reviewer in the *Month* (February, 1932) may be cited, that Osuna's first preoccupation is 'to establish recognition of the prayer of contemplation as a real and just aim for the many, and not for the rare few only.'

That the same is the tradition of the Old Orders in general needs little proof.

St. Gregory the Great is the chief spiritual writer among Benedictines. His mind on this point is brought out with unmistakable clearness in *Western Mysticism*, section K on St. Gregory. In the book on the 'Pastoral Care' he lays down that 'contemplation' is an indispensable qualification for all pastors of souls. And in regard to the laity he lays down:

> There is no state of life of the faithful from which

the grace of contemplation can be excluded; and so anyone who keeps his heart controlled may be illumined by the light of contemplation; so that no one can glory in this grace as if it were singular.[1]

Also, he preached on contemplation in public sermons in the Lateran Basilica to mixed congregations of all comers, showing that he thought his hearers likely to be concerned in the instructions on contemplation. St. Gregory's teaching on the whole range of the spiritual life held sway throughout the Latin Church up to the rise of Scholasticism.

As a modern Benedictine endorsement of St. Gregory we may cite words of Bishop Hedley in his article on *Sancta Sophia*, reproduced under the title 'Prayer and Contemplation' in the volume of reprinted Essays recently published.[2]

> Contemplation is not ordinary prayer. Yet it is not one of those extraordinary gifts which humble souls may not aspire to. It is the very aim of the teaching of Fr. Baker and his school that 'extraordinary' prayer (contemplation) should be an ordinary state for Christian souls, for priests, for religious, for devout layfolk, and for the poor and unlearned, who love God with all their heart.

[1] *Western Mysticism, loc. cit.*

[2] *Evolution and Faith, with other Essays*, p. 163 (Sheed & Ward, 1931). This whole Essay, 'Prayer and Contemplation,' may be most strongly recommended to all in any way keen about their spiritual life, as an admirable statement, theological and practical, of the things being touched on here.

> It is true that few arrive at true 'interior' prayer until after many years of patient exercise. But still, in the sense that, with due perseverance and by the help of God, it will come at last, we may say that it is 'ordinary.' It is thus that it differs from ecstasy, rapture, visions, and other miraculous supernatural favours. These no one has a right to aspire to or expect.

And later on in the same essay, 'The end and object of the man of prayer is to attain to contemplation' (p. 179).

There is no need to pursue the point in the case of the other Old Orders, for it is not likely to be disputed in face of Saudreau's demonstration.

KINDS OF MENTAL PRAYER

But the question arises naturally: 'What is contemplation?' And here, though the thing was for centuries a matter of common agreement, we now seem to be embarked on a sea of controversies, many different ideas being held, to the great confusion and hindrance of the spiritual life of the Faithful. I have long been convinced that the root of the confusion lies in the fact that different notions have become current as to the meaning of 'contemplation,' quite different meanings being attached to the term, so that the uncertainties are due in greatest measure to questions of definition and terminology. I hope it

will not seem presumptuous or foolhardy for me to make an effort towards clearing the ground where theologians of eminence have failed, owing I cannot but think to an overpressing of different theological systems. Prescinding from questions of theological theory, and going only on the data supplied by religious psychology, by what takes place in the mind, it seems that the following grades or stages in mental prayer may be distinguished. And here I wish to refer to the tiny tractate of Fr. Robert Steuart, S.J., *A Map of Prayer*;[1] it will be found clear and helpful.

(*a*) *Discoursive Meditation.*—It is agreed by all the Masters that a course of mental prayer will normally begin with such meditation: so St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, St. Francis of Sales, Fr. Baker; to cite only those who hold that in time the soul should pass on to 'contemplation.' The nature of meditation is so well known that there is no need to say much about it. There are many forms of meditation, differing in the degree of methodical system followed. The most methodical and the standard system of meditation is that of the famous Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Their scheme is followed in a simplified form by St. Francis of Sales in the meditations of Book I of the *Devout Life*. A much simpler kind of meditation is that proposed by St. Teresa, as set forth in these pages (above, p. 121). But all kinds of discoursive meditation have this in common—it is their very

[1] Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1928.

nature—that they are a systematised methodical thinking on some religious truth, idea, or fact, as the incidents of our Lord's Life and Passion. The faculties of the mind—memory, imagination, intellect, will—are brought to bear upon the subject, in order that we may the better penetrate its meaning, draw out its lessons, and resolve to carry them out in our lives. Let Fr. Steuart speak :

> The memory collects the facts of the matter : the intellect reasons about them, balances them, and draws inferences from them : the will, thus stimulated, decides upon its course of action. Usually a fixed ' colloquy,' at the end lays the decision before God and asks for confirmation, help, and grace.
>
> The object of formal meditation is the accumulation of such a knowledge (an apperception) of God and of the truths of religion, of Christ and His teaching, of the virtues and vices, and the rest, as will form a solid and reliable foundation, and supply perpetual and thoroughly well-grounded and sincere motives for the rest of our spiritual activity.

(*b*) *Affective Prayer*.—This finds a place in discoursive meditation, especially in the ' Colloquy ' of St. Ignatius's method. The purpose of the working of the powers of the mind, imagination, memory, understanding, is to lead up to affections and acts of various kinds, and in them precisely lies the

element of *prayer;* because *thinking* about a religious object is not necessarily prayer; theological study or speculation is not of itself prayer, though it may be prayerfully made.

We have seen it to be the clear injunction of St. Francis of Sales that the meditating part of a discoursive meditation, the thinking and reasoning, should always give place to affective prayer whenever the soul finds itself moved to pour forth itself in affection of love, or of what virtue soever, to God—that is, to *pray*. He even says that if the affections come at the beginning and last throughout the whole time of the meditation, they never are to be restrained, but free rein is to be given to them, the considerations, if so be, being wholly passed over (see *Devout Life*, II, viii).

Facility in affective prayer will depend in great measure on natural temperament. The affections, in ordinary parlance, belong to the emotional side of our nature, and the emotions are related with our bodily make-up; affections of love, joy, desire, are *felt* in the sensitive part of our nature, and they come more easily to souls of a tender and affectionate natural temper; they come therefore more easily to women than to men. And in times of dryness and desolation of soul in prayer it is wellnigh impossible to stir up the affections.

Fr. Baker therefore distinguishes prayer of affections from prayer of acts of the will.

(*c*) *Prayer of Acts of the Will.*—If I mistake not, his teaching on these Acts of the Will is Fr. Baker's most characteristic and helpful contribution to the spiritual life of ordinary souls, be they priests, religious, or good layfolk, who are treading faithfully the ordinary paths of the Christian life, trying to love and serve God according to their state, and to cultivate prayer in such measure as may be practicable.[1]

The Acts are the operations of the highest faculties of the soul, intellect and will, without admixture of the emotional side or of our sensible nature. There is a sensible pleasure felt in exercising Affections; there is usually little or none in Acts, which at their highest are made in the region of pure intellect and will, without relish, and for the most part are a laborious and painful exercise. We would suppose that prayer—a raising of the mind and heart to God, a communing with Him, a heart to heart talk with Him who is our Father, our best Friend and Lover—must be the easiest and most delightful thing in the world, and that we could never have enough of it. But experience teaches us that it is not so at all; that for most of us any prolonged concentration in prayer is an exercise of the mind that is difficult laborious, fatiguing, without pleasure, other than th pleasure felt in trying to do one's duty. In circum

[1] On Acts of the Will, see *Sancta Sophia*, pp. 431–56. Also the late Dom B. Weld Blundell's booklet already spoken of (above, p. 34).

stances of dryness and dullness and distraction and desolation, when it is impossible to stir up the emotions to pour out Affections, it is possible to keep the intellect and will at work on Acts of various kinds to God. They are without joy ; they do not come easily ; they have to be ground out ; and so Fr. Baker calls them 'Forced Acts,' because they have to be forced out by pressure exercised by the intellect on the will.

Most people who try to pray suffer from periods, often prolonged, of aridity, distraction, and indevotion ; when praying becomes a really painful exercise, when it is impossible to stir up the affections and very difficult to work through a formal meditation. In such times these forced Acts of the will are the only kind of prayer that can be made ; and Fr. Baker teaches us how to train ourselves so as to be able to make them, and also supplies us with materials for such prayer. His 'Patterns of Devout Exercises' affixed to *Sancta Sophia* have been spoken of already (p. 34). Also Blosius's *Conversations with Jesus or Exercises on the Life and Passion of our Lord*, which supply a great number of such acts. Fr. Baker above all recommends Acts of Re formity o the Will of God in les, ials, difficulties, sorrow ula : 'Oh my God, signation and Con all the occurring troub mity to Thy holy ys of life. He gives the for- er it may be. His for love of Thee, and in con- will, I resign myself to '—what- s idea is that the act of resignation

be repeated with earnestness and deliberate acceptance, quietly and with reality, over and over again throughout the time of prayer.[1] Such prayer, if really our own vital act, is of very high value, as being the conforming of our own will to God's will, wherein essentially holiness and perfection lie, as we have learned so emphatically from St. Teresa, to name only her; also such prayer will tell upon our life and our character, strengthening in us the practice of virtue. Fr. Baker supplies also other kinds of Acts, as of 'Pure Love of God.'

PRAYER OF LOVING ATTENTION

(*d*) *Prayer of Loving Attention.*—This kind of prayer is pivotal for the present purpose, the controversies current on Contemplation really turning upon it. I have dealt with it very carefully in the 'Afterthoughts' to the second edition of *Western Mysticism*, texts from leading authorities being there cited in illustration. To this discussion I refer any reader really interested in the vital questions involved. Here will

[1] As a practical instance: When privileged to give the Retreat to the Secular C… sted this act of resignation as one sometim… parish priests: 'Oh my God, for love … Thy holy will, I resign myself t… pu… for as long as the Bishop shal… Clergy, I have sugge… a very real act of conformity … es likely to be suitable for … of the very highest order … of Thee, and in conformity to … also prays likewise, *muta…* t up with this uncongenial curate … yed like this for their h… eave him with me.' Not only is this … ns are likely to be grea… God's will in something trying, and so … virtue and love of God; but if the curat… *mutandis*, it is certain that, both having pr… hour of mental prayer, their mutual relatio… eased and improved.

be reproduced only the description of this kind of prayer given by St. John of the Cross :

> The passage from meditation to contemplation takes place when the discoursive acts and meditation fail, when sensible sweetness and first fervours cease, when the soul cannot make reflections as before, nor find any sensible comfort, but is fallen into aridity. . . . Souls in this state are not to be forced to meditate or to apply themselves to discoursive reflections laboriously effected, neither are they to strive after sweetness and fervour. . . . *The soul must be lovingly intent upon God, without distinctly eliciting other acts beyond those to which He inclines it; making no efforts of its own, purely, simply, and lovingly intent upon God, as a man who opens his eyes with loving attention.*[1]

In the 'Afterthoughts' it is shown that this same kind of prayer is recognised by other outstanding authorities under a variety of names. It is there shown (p. xxv) that St. Teresa speaks of it as 'Interior Recollection'[2]; St. Francis of Sales as 'Simple Committal (remise) to God'; St. Jane de Chantal as 'Calm Attention to God'; Fr. Baker as 'Interior

[1] See the whole passage, and others, in *Western Mysticism*, section 'The Contemplative Life,' sub-heading 'Contemplation.'

[2] St. Teresa's use of the term 'Recollection' is not consistent ('Afterthoughts,' p. xxiv): the Fourth Mansion of the *Interior Castle* contains two distinct grades of prayer: in cc. i and ii the Prayer of Quiet (*e* below), and in c. iii is thrown in as an afterthought 'Prayer of Recollection,' which really comes before Quiet. Her best description of Recollection has been cited above (p. 137) Relation VIII.

Silence'[1]; Bossuet as 'Prayer of Faith' or 'Prayer of Simplicity.'

Under this last name the idea of this kind of prayer has been popularised by Père Poulain, S.J., in his great work, *Les Graces d'Oraison*, the second chapter containing a full account of it, theoretical and practical. This chapter has been published by itself in French, and also in English, as a Catholic Truth Society sixpenny tract, which has run to several thousands. The name and the characterisation are taken from a little-known tractate of Bossuet: *Manière courte et facile pour faire l'oraison de Foi, et de la Simple Présence de Dieu.* It is appended to the *Spiritual Instructions on Prayer* of Père de Caussade, S.J., and to the *Manual for Interior Souls* of Père Grou, S.J., in the original French and in the English translation of the two works. Bossuet describes it as 'a simple looking or loving attention to a divine object, without reasoning, discourse, or multitude of affections.'[2]

Of all the names proposed for this prayer, that given it by St. John of the Cross in various places, 'Prayer of Loving Attention,'[3] seems the best, as most clearly expressing the character of the prayer. It is worth noting that St. Francis of Sales in one plac

[1] Bishop Hedley vindicates this chapter of *Sancta Sophia* from suspicion of Quietistic taint (Essays, *Evolution and Faith*, p. 3 'Prayer and Contemplation'); see 'Afterthoughts,' p. xix.
[2] See full piece, 'Afterthoughts,' p. xx.
[3] 'Afterthoughts,' p. xviii.

gives it the same name, 'Loving Attention' (*Love of God*, Bk. VI, c. iii).

The two following are St. Teresa's :

(*e*) *Prayer of Quiet.*—Mansion IV, cc. i, ii ; *Way of Perfection* (c. xxxi, § 1), cited in 'Afterthoughts,' p. xxiii.

(*f*) *Prayer of Union.*—Mansion V ; also *Life*, cc. xvi, xvii, the 'Third Watering.'

These two kinds of prayer, Quiet and Union, really fall outside our scope ; they are treated with care in the 'Afterthoughts,' p. xxii *ff.* Much more do the Sixth and Seventh Mansions fall outside our scope.

It will suffice to say here that the Prayer of Union is what is now spoken of as the full 'Mystic Experience,' the same as Fr. Baker's 'passive union purely intellectual,' described in *Sancta Sophia*, pp. 531 *ff.* The Prayer of Quiet is, so to say, on the threshold of full union, the borderland between the Prayer of Loving Attention and Union.

The foregoing list of kinds of prayer distinguishable on grounds of psychology, may be gathered up in the following Table :

(*a*) Discoursive Meditation.
(*b*) Affective Prayer.
(*c*) Prayer of Forced Acts of the Will.
(*d*) Prayer of Loving Attention, or of Simplicity.
(*e*) Prayer of Quiet.
(*f*) Prayer of Union.

WHAT IS CONTEMPLATION?

As this whole examination of the kinds of mental prayer started from the question: 'What is Contemplation?' and is an attempt towards clearing up the controversies set going on the subject by the theologians in our own day; and also an attempt towards bringing out what was the age-long idea in early and pre-Reformation times as to 'contemplation'; we may ask where in the above Table is the line 'Contemplation' to be drawn?

To this question different answers are given, whence the existing uncertainties and controversies.

1. *St. Teresa.*—She draws the line quite definitely between (*e*) and (*f*); for her, only the Prayer of Union is contemplation properly so called, 'true supernatural contemplation.'[1] The Prayer of Quiet she recognises as 'the beginning of pure contemplation,' as 'touching on supernatural prayer.' But to no kind of prayer below Quiet, (*e*), does she give the name 'contemplation' in any way at all: in particular she does not give it to the Prayer of Loving Attention, her Interior Recollection.[2]

[1] Theologians point out that St. Teresa's use of the term 'supernatural' is peculiar and untheological. Every real prayer, even the simplest, made by the help of divine grace, is supernatural. By 'supernatural prayer' she means prayer which 'we cannot acquire or procure for ourselves, no matter what care or diligence we may use to it,' but which is wholly God's work in the soul: 'passive' prayer, called, the soul only disposing itself for it, and acquiescing when it comes.

[2] To prevent confusion it should be said that in the 'Seventh Watering' of the *Life* (cc. XIV, XV) she seems not to distinguish

2. *St. John of the Cross.*—He, on the contrary, habitually in many places says that the Prayer of Loving Attention is 'Contemplation,' even 'infused contemplation'—the beginning of it, but still 'Contemplation.'[1] Be it understood, it is not suggested that there is any difference of teaching between the two great Carmelite lights in respect to the *things* of prayer, only in respect to *names*, terminology; whether a particular kind of prayer, known to them both, is, or is not, to be called 'Contemplation.'

No small confusion in the discussion of these matters has been caused by the failure, in spite of glaring facts, on the part of theologians to perceive that the terminology of the two Saints is different in regard to what may be called the lower boundary line of contemplation; and by dealing with their writings as if they meant exactly the same thing. A recent writer has complained that St. John is obscure, being differently interpreted by different writers. The controversies over St. John are due to the fact of different writers striving to squeeze him into their own theological schemes. Allowed to speak for himself, and taken as meaning just what he says, he is probably the clearest of all mystical writers.

To round up St. John's teaching: he will not

collection and Quiet; but in her last and most mature word on things of prayer, *The Interior Castle*, in Mansion IV, c. iii, she quite nitely distinguishes them—and rightly.

See the references in 'Afterthoughts,' pp. xxvi, xxxvi *ff.*, and the e discussions there.

regard Affective Prayer or Acts of the Will as contemplation. This appears in the well-known diatribe against Directors of a certain type. When the soul is in the state of Loving Attention,

> when God withholds all sweetness from it, and suspends its power of meditation, a spiritual director will appear, who, like a rough blacksmith, knows only the use of his hammer, and who, because all his knowledge is limited to the coarse work, will say to it: Come, get rid of this; this is waste of time and idleness: arise and meditate, resume thine interior acts; for it is necessary thou shouldst make diligent efforts of thine own; every thing else is delusion and folly (*Living Flame*, iii).

Therefore St. John draws the boundary line of contemplation between (*c*) and (*d*) of the Table.

3. *St. Ignatius.*—If St. Teresa draws the line of contemplation at a higher level than tradition, St. Ignatius draws it in the Exercises at a lower. Let Fr. Steuart explain in his already spoken of *Map of Prayer*:

> In the *Spiritual Exercises* St. Ignatius distinguishes contemplation from meditation. But he uses the word contemplation in a sense quite different from that of the mystic writers. He means by it a meditation in which the scene (usually some incident in our Lord's life) is pictured

vividly: one is invited to live in it for the time being, to see the persons, hear their voices, watch their movements, take notice of all accessory details. He calls it also, in a slightly different connection, 'the application of the senses,' implying that we should make the subject of our prayer a tangible reality, fitting ourselves into the scene, feeding our intellect and our will as if from an actual experience of it. The value of this form of prayer is that it combats the tendency to make of meditation a purely speculative occupation; and that it inevitably leads to a very precious intimacy with the Gospel story (*Map*, p. 8).

This is something quite different, as Fr. Steuart says, from the old idea of contemplation. Compare St. Gregory the Great[1]: 'The first step in contemplation is recollection. But the mind cannot recollect itself unless it has learned to shut out all phantasmata of earthly and heavenly images, and to reject and spurn all sense impressions.' Such emptying of the mind, and the hushing of the faculties, was for the Old Masters the very condition of contemplation; and it is also the burden of the teaching of St. John of the Cross.

4. *St. Francis of Sales.*—He deals with our question the first six chapters of Book VI of the *Love of* , which should be read; they are reproduced stantially in the Harrow Visitation abridgement.

[1] See passages cited in *Western Mysticism*, pp. 97–105.

For him, as for all, mental prayer begins with Discoursive Meditation. He describes it in chapter ii :

> The soul passes from mystery to mystery, not at random, but deliberately and of set purpose, to find out motives of love or of some heavenly affection. And having found them, she draws them to her, she relishes them, and having brought them back and put them within her heart, she lays up what she sees most useful for her advancement, by finally making resolutions suitable for the time of temptation.

The purpose of meditation is to stir up devotion ; it then passes into Contemplation.

> Prayer is named Meditation until it has produced the honey of devotion, and then it is converted into Contemplation. . . . We meditate in order to gather the love of God ; but having gathered it we contemplate God, and are attentive to His goodness, by reason of the sweetness which love makes us find in it. The desire we have to obtain divine love makes us meditate ; but love obtained makes us contemplate. . . . Meditation is the mother and Contemplation is the daughter of love ; and for this reason I called Contemplation ' a loving attention.' . . . Love having excited in us contemplative attention, that attention breeds a greater and more fervent love (collected from c. iii).

At the opening of this chapter, iii, he gives his formal definition :

'Contemplation is no other thing than a loving, simple, and permanent attention of the spirit to divine things.' :—permanent, that is to say, not perpetual, but during what time the act of contemplation in prayer may last.

It will not be questioned that for St. Francis, Loving Attention is Contemplation. And so, in company with St. John of the Cross, he stands in the line of the old tradition, before the term 'contemplation' had been diverted to the right hand or to the left, had been moved upwards or downwards in the scale.

We are now in the position to lay down, that when the Old Orders—and not only the Old Orders, but the Old Doctors and Masters of the Spiritual Life in all times up to the Reformation—hold out 'contemplation' to all pastors and all devout souls leading a life of good earnest Christian endeavour, as the normal issue of serious spiritual exercisings in prayer ; when in such a passage as the one quoted at the beginning of this section from Fr. Cuthbert's Introduction to Osuna's *Alphabet*, it is urged that contemplative prayer 'belongs to the whole body of the Church, ...ity as well as clergy,' that it 'is for the many, not ...r the few' : the contemplation in mind is what has ...en characterised as 'Prayer of Loving Attention.' ...o will say that good, devout souls, even the most

simple and ignorant, do not at times have moments, minutes, periods of 'loving attention,' simply wrapt in God: at Mass it may be, during the Consecration, at Communion, at Benediction, at visits to the Blessed Sacrament, at other quiet times of prayer. For the time being, short though it be, it is 'contemplation,' to be nursed and maintained for as long as it lasts, as God's good gift. Such moments are above all likely at Holy Communion, and they should be treasured and made the most of. Not until we find the 'attention' is waning into a blank, and other alien thoughts are invading the mind, should we have recourse to our prayer-book or to definite vocal prayers, in order to make our acts of thanksgiving. We should give God His full chance of working in our souls, realising that these little bouts of simple contemplation are God's precious gift, of inestimable value for our spiritual life.[1]

ACTIVE OR ACQUIRED CONTEMPLATION

The opening words of c. vii of Bk. VI of the *Love of God*, where St. Francis is passing on to treat of

[1] To prevent misunderstandings, it may be opportune to point out to the readers of the series of volumes of the late very devout Dom Salvinian Louismet of Buckfast Abbey, that he uses the words 'Mysticism,' 'Contemplation' in senses entirely his own—'Mysticism' meaning for him the whole Christian life, and 'Contemplation' all and every prayer, any 'communing with God.' Take thus, the volume *Divine Contemplation for All, or the Simple Art of Communing with God*, 'any species of direct intercourse of the devo Christian with God' (p. 193), urges what is a mere truism; but it not the meaning of 'Contemplation' as understood by the Fath and Doctors of the Standard Catholic tradition.

the Prayers of Quiet and Union, and the higher grades of mystical prayer, have an interesting bearing on points under debate among the theologians.

He has just finished speaking of the contemplation of Loving Attention that is the very usual issue of meditation; now he says he is no longer going to speak of the recollection

> by which such as are about to pray place themselves in God's presence, entering into themselves, and as one would say, bringing their souls into their hearts, there to speak with God; for this recollection is made by love's command, which provoking us to prayer moves us to take this means of doing it well, so that we ourselves make this withdrawal of our spirit.

In this he is referring back to the contemplation, the Loving Attention of the previous chapters. But in contrast, he says of the kinds of recollection he is now going to speak of, Quiet, Union, higher mystic contemplation, of St. Teresa's last three Mansions, that

> they are not made by love's command, but by love itself; that is, we do not make it by free choice, for it is not in our power to have it when we please, and it does not depend on our care, but God at His pleasure works it in us by His most holy grace.

The pieces just cited make it clear beyond dispute that for St. Francis there are two kinds of contemplation, (1) that spoken of in cc. iii–vi, and (2) that spoken of in c. vii and onward; the difference lying in the fact that our own endeavours and working, divine grace of course assisting, bring about the first; whereas the second is wholly God's work in the soul, any efforts of our own being powerless to bring it about. It has not, so far as I know, been noticed that this passage of so supreme an authority as St. Francis is in mystical theology, ought to be decisive in a controversy much vexing the theologians: namely, if two kinds or grades of contemplation should be recognised, to be called 'active' and 'passive'; or, if all contemplation is only and fully 'passive'? And so, whether it be correct to speak of 'Acquired Contemplation,' in the sense that we can do something ourselves towards bringing it about, as described by St. Francis in the first of these pieces? It is in the main a matter of definition: if St. Teresa's definition of contemplation be followed, there is no room for any contemplation other than passive. If St. Francis be followed, then it is right to speak of a kind of contemplation that is active and acquired.

The matter is handled at some length in 'Afterthoughts.' It is not in question that the term 'acquired contemplation' was not used by the old Masters; it came in as the result of St. Teresa's rigid definition of contemplation, limiting it to t

higher, passive, kinds. The old Masters spoke simply of ' contemplation ' ; but they knew of both kinds, the active as well as the passive. The passages cited in *Western Mysticism* show that for SS. Augustine, Gregory, Bernard, the ordinary preliminaries are such mental processes as Recollection and Introversion,[1] whereby the soul by efforts of its own puts itself into a state in which, by the help of grace, it can experience and exercise kinds of prayer that they called contemplation. St. Gregory in particular pictures contemplation as an endeavour and struggle of the soul to rise above its material surroundings to the contemplation of things above (see the series of passages cited in *Western Mysticism*, pp. 97—105).

I think it should be recognised that what is now spoken of as ' active or acquired contemplation ' was in fact regarded as contemplation not only by the old Masters, but by such modern ones as St. John of the Cross and St. Francis of Sales.

ORDINARY PRAYER

The Prayer of Loving Attention, or of Simplicity, is recognised as the term of ordinary prayer. In his book, *The Science of Prayer*, already spoken of (p. 136), Fr. Ludovic de Besse, O.S.F.C., sums up the natural progress in prayer, according to the mind of St. John of the Cross (*op. cit.* c. ix) :

> Meditation carefully practised leads on to affec-

[1] See the section A under each name.

tive prayer; this in its turn leads just as surely to the 'Prayer of Faith' (*i.e.*, Loving Attention). The grace of prayer generally terminates here, for it has reached the degree of ordinary perfection. Beyond that point prayer becomes extraordinary.

The same is Fr. Steuart's idea in the *Map of Prayer*, the last section of which (pp. 10–14) on Simplification is most practical and helpful.

Nor should it be thought that the higher kinds of prayer, the mystical states of Quiet and Passive Union, are the permanent everyday prayer of any, even of the most highly gifted and saintly of the mystics. In the case of some, a passive union is an experience that comes only once or twice in a lifetime. In other cases it is a frequent experience; St. Ignatius at the end of his life seems to have received it almost daily. St. Bernard on the other hand laments: 'Alas, how rarely has it happened (to himself), and for how short a time it has lasted' (*Western Mysticism*, p. 155). It seems to last usually hardly more than a quarter of an hour, seldom for longer. It is not a thing that even a Saint can calculate on every time he sets himself to prayer. And so the ordinary kinds of prayer—Meditation, Affective Prayer, Loving Attention, along with vocal prayers—are the everyday staple of the prayer even of those on occasion raised to the heights. And we have learned from St. Teresa that sanctity and true union with God do not depend on these higher mystical graces.

Furthermore, it should be understood that the four kinds of mental prayer that are fairly within the reach of good devout souls—Meditation, Affective Prayer, Acts of the Will, Loving Attention—are not separated off in watertight compartments. They will be intermingled according to the states and attractions and enablements of the soul, perhaps from day to day. St. John is clear on this, that one, at times enabled for Loving Attention, may at other times profitably revert to Meditation: but the tendency should be steadily upwards (see piece cited in 'Afterthoughts,' p. xlvii., and in part above, p. 137).

VOCAL PRAYER AND CONTEMPLATION

The foregoing discussions have been concerned wholly with mental prayer, and the impression might easily be carried away that contemplation of whatever kind is associated with mental prayer only, to the exclusion of vocal prayer. That, of course, would be a great mistake. Not to speak of the Holy Mass, which stands by itself, many Saints have been raised to ecstasy while saying the divine Office: it is related that St. Ignatius was dispensed from the Office because of the frequent raptures into which he fell when he tried to recite it. St. Teresa, the great apostle of mental prayer, emphatically insists that 'it is quite possible while you are reciting the "Our Father," or some other prayer, if you say it well, that God may raise you to perfect contemplation.'

She says also that 'she knew a nun'—that is herself—'who enjoyed pure contemplation while saying the "Our Father."'[1] Abbot Isaac in Cassian declares that 'a verse of any one of the psalms will give us an occasion of pure and glowing prayer while we are singing.'[2]

Finally, to show what the power of the Gregorian chant may be as an incentive to contemplation, thus confirming what our Holy Father Pius XI says of its religious efficacy, this chapter will be concluded by the following morsel from a tractate of a ninth-century monk on the manner of chanting:

> Let us hold fast to the right tradition of singing, that in accordance with the Rule of Blessed Benedict our Father, minds and voices may perfectly agree, since it is in the presence of the Holy Trinity and all the Angels that we both chant and sing. So with compunction of heart, with lowly fear, with devout mind, with fervour of spirit, inflamed with inmost longing for the things above, raised by the words which we employ to the contemplation of heavenly mysteries—with sweetness of feeling, with purity of soul, with pleasing gravity, with befitting cheerfulness, in suave melodies, in delicious passages, with musical voices, and gladness ineffable, let us sing joyfully to God our Maker so that at last admitted to the company of the Saint

[1] *Way of Perfection*, cc. xxv, 1; xxx, 7.
[2] *Collation* ix, 18.

moving with them in the chorus of never-ending bliss, we may be found worthy to praise Him who hath called us there where He liveth and reigneth for ever and ever (Translation of Dom Alphege Shebbeare, *Downside Review*, 1919).

It will not be questioned that such chanting of the Liturgy is contemplative prayer.

VIII. GATHERING THE FRAGMENTS

It may appear that the suggestions for the spiritual life of good lay folk scattered over the pages of this book are perhaps desultory, fragmentary, and in order to be practically helpful need to be brought together and co-ordinated into some kind of working programme. Therefore, the attempt will be made in these few closing pages, to gather up the fragments.

And first, be it laid down that those kept in view in the making of this book are the workers of all kinds, the general run of men and women, who have one way or another to earn their livelihood, be it as professional men, business men, tradesmen, artisans, labourers, of all kinds and degrees in each category. That is to say, men who have to leave home by eight o'clock, or soon after, so as to be at their place of work, office or shop or factory, or what not, by nine; and, of course, artisans or labourers earlier still: who are at work all day, and do not get back home till six o'clock or later: whose whole working day is fully taken up with the exacting, engrossing, fatiguing, routine duties of their calling, whatever it be. Many of the women nowadays lead the same kind of life, and the others are no less occupied over the domestic duties of married women in keeping the home.

It is the hope of helping the Christian life, the spiritual life, of the great crowd of men and women, whose lot in life is of the kind just pictured, and not any leisured class, that has prompted the writing of this book.

It may therefore, as the starting point, be laid down that whatever be the path of Christian life that anyone be treading—priest, or nun, or good lay man or woman—there are always two sides to it, two aspects: there are the exercisings which we carry out on our own soul, our mind and heart; and our exercising directly on Almighty God. The first may be summed up as 'self-discipline,' the second as 'worship.'

This division, which is according to the nature of things, was made in the book that was the earliest of all formal treatises on the science of the Christian spiritual life—the *Conferences of Cassian.*

I. SELF-DISCIPLINE: ASCETICISM

In Conference *XIV* an old abbot of the Egyptian deserts laid down that 'spiritual knowledge,' the theory of the spiritual life, is twofold.[1] The first element is that which he calls 'the actual or practical life,' and lies in purification from faults and improvement of morals. This is what is familiarly called purification, or more broadly, asceticism. It is a

[1] The actual discourse may be found in *Benedictine Monachism*, p. .

common, but a great error, to identify these spiritual exercisings with bodily austerities, as fastings, disciplines, hair shirts; for this is only one aspect, and the least important: they mean something greatly more than doing unpleasant things to ourselves. Asceticism in its full and true meaning is 'training,' being from a Greek word used of the training athletes underwent in preparation for the contests at the games, such as our athletes go through. We think of St. Paul's likening the Christian life to a Race (1 Cor. ix), and how those who strive for the mastery in the games are temperate in all things. And so, according to Cassian's old abbot, the ascetical training in the Christian life means first, the combating all the evil inclinations, all the tendencies to sin, that are the universal legacy of our fallen nature; and secondly, the cultivation and practice of the virtues and formation of good habits. The soul is as a garden, and the gardener's first work must be to clear the ground of weeds, uprooting them and keeping them down; his second work is the planting and cultivating the vegetables and flowers. The two processes have to go on together always, without respite; and the success of the growth of vegetables and flowers depends on the thoroughness with which the weeding is kept up. Thus Cassian's 'actual life,' or asceticism is the lifelong process of formation of our Christ character; and so understood, asceticism, mortification, are the condition of any kind of good Chris

life; and, indeed, of any decent moral life whatever. For a life without sustained effort at self-discipline, self-control, self-denial, must needs be utterly vile.

Cassian's abbot then lays down that this 'actual or practical life' may be carried out in a variety of forms of life as training-ground in virtue. He has monks in view, and specifies as kinds of religious activities, among others, such things as works of hospitality, or nursing the sick, or caring and consoling the poor, or teaching; but his outlook may be generalised so as to embrace any and every kind of good honest life in the world. Any form of Christian life will afford a good training-ground for the exercise of self-discipline and the cultivation of virtue, and the formation of Christian character. The married life stands out pre-eminent, and the family life, as the ordinary school of virtue intended by God for mankind; and any honest profession or business or trade or occupation: in short, any career may be, by the faithful carrying out of its duties, the fruitful field for the ethical work of the practical life. What the old abbot impresses on us is that, having once chosen some good form of life, we should stick to it, throw ourselves into it 'with all our might and main,' performing its duties, availing ourselves of its opportunities, and making a good thing of it—as surely we can—for exercising ourselves in the disciplinary side of our spiritual life, breaking in our waywardness, and overcoming our faults.

PERFECTION POSSIBLE IN ANY STATE OF LIFE

We must remember that the Love of God and the Service of God lie essentially in keeping His Commandments, obeying His Laws, and in trying to do His Will in all things: 'Not he that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father, who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' This doing God's will lies for each of us in the faithful doing of the duties of our state of life. Furthermore, union with God means essentially the union of our will with His (this we have heard emphatically from St. Teresa); and so the resigning ourselves to His divine handling of us, the conforming our wills to His, the accepting what befalls us as from His hands. And all this can be done in any conditions of life whatsoever, in the world as in the cloister. And when it really is well done, it spells true substantive holiness. Thus real Christian holiness and perfection lies open to all. Elsewhere I have written:[1]

> In any state of life there is no limit to the degree of personal perfection that may be reached, even unto heroic sanctity—and not in spite of, but by means of, the duties of that state of life. This is God's will in regard to each one, and by the faithful and religious performance of the duties our state of life we are doing God's will and obey

[1] *Western Mysticism*, ed. 2, 'Afterthoughts,' p. lviii.

His commandment, which, so the Best Authority has assured us, is the supreme test of love of God; and he who does this perfectly has, so far forth, attained to perfect love of God and to perfection. This is possible, is open, in any condition of life, even the busiest and most distractive.

We sometimes may be inclined to dream that if only we could be free from the day-long calls of business and from the cares and worries of life, how free we should then be to cultivate our souls and give ourselves up in earnest to the love and service of God; and we may come to look on the occupations of our life as an impediment to our spiritual life. They are not; they are an integral part of our spiritual life when they are the duties of our state of life; they are the training-ground in which we have been placed by Providence for the exercise of virtue and the formation of our Christian character. Not by quitting our appointed battle of life, but by overcoming in it, do we prove our love and service of God.

And if any one ask how to begin, how to set to work, to him may be said: Take the advice of St. Francis of Sales, and begin with the 'little virtues'—patience, gentleness, good humour, kindness and the rest: see what he says (above, pp. 150, 167). Or read here again the fine piece of Père Grou on interior mortification, who promises that its practice, as he sets it forth, spells even 'eminent virtue.' Why not? Anyone, anywhere, can curb irritation and ill-temper.

There is no danger to health of body or mind; no occasion for vanity in things so obvious; and they take up no time, nor interfere in any way with the work or business we are engaged on; it need not be in church, but in office or workshop, or in the home. Such virtue, such perfection, even in a high degree, is within the reach of any, in any state of life, who may have the courage to pursue it.

LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR

But personal perfection is not enough; in speaking of Christian perfection the Second Great Commandment also must be borne in mind, the Love of Neighbour. The command to love one another looms big in our Lord's preaching, as being His own special commandment, the very test of discipleship: 'This is my commandment'; 'By this shall men know.' And it has to be no mere benevolence, but active works of charity. In what He tells us of His Great Assize, our sentence will turn on the questions, Have we fed the hungry, clothed the naked, harboured the harbourless, visited the sick and the imprisoned? And so the Works of Mercy, corporal and spiritual, must have their proper place in any Christian life. They will be in great measure carried out by the duty of almsgiving according to ou means; and this again may be in great measure do by subscriptions and contributions to public go objects and charitable organisations. But in addit

to such vicarious almsgiving, personal service and contact is greatly to be desired. We are told by our Lord to do as did the Good Samaritan: he gave both personal service in picking up the injured man and binding his wounds; and he also gave money that he might be properly cared for. Wherever the Society of St. Vincent of Paul is established, good Catholic lay men have the chance of joining a Confraternity whose object it is to add a religious element to the twofold form of almsgiving by money and by personal service.

Enough has been said to bring out the fact that Christian perfection, that is to say, the keeping of the Two Great Commandments of Love of God and Love of Neighbour, true Religion, lies within the grasp of all: 'Qui potest capere, capiat!'

II. WORSHIP: PRAYER

We have been dealing with the first element of the spiritual life, self-discipline and asceticism or training, the part of it that is exercised upon ourselves; we come now to the second part, that which is exercised directly on Almighty God by way of worship and prayer.

In the well-known story of Martha and Mary it will be remembered how our Lord said: 'One thing necessary: Mary hath chosen the good part.'[1]

[1] 'The good part,' so all Greek texts; the Vulgate and many other Latin texts have 'the best part.'

These words have from the beginning been taken as the charter of the contemplative life. But they have a far wider, nay, a universal application. By them Mary's part is declared to be not merely 'good,' 'best,' but to be 'necessary,' 'needful'; *i.e.*, necessary for all: so that the quiet sitting at our Lord's feet, listening to Him, communing with God in prayer, is hereby declared to be a necessary element of every Christian life, and, indeed, of every life. Thus, whatever be one's lot in life, prayer is pronounced by our Lord to be the necessary ingredient, and the time passed in prayer to be the 'good part,' the most precious of our lives. Short though it may be, and perforce for most men is, it must always be the one thing really necessary for the vitalising of the spiritual life in us, and the keeping us in touch with Almighty God and in His friendship. Therefore it behoves the busy, hard-working man to see to it, that he bring into his life prayer in a sufficient measure.

This side of the spiritual life embraces *worship* the creature's primary duty; *petition* for the things we need, whether of soul or body, religious or also temporal; *prayer proper*, the raising up of the mind and heart to God, and communing with Him. This is the direct religious element of our life, and to secure it properly in adequate measure should be, must be the chief concern of those whose lot it is to live but lives in the world.

KEEPING SUNDAY HOLY

At once there stands out the Sunday observance as the foremost consideration.

The Sunday is the day of rest, of recuperation of body and mind after the week's work; but it is still more, and in its first idea, a time of recuperation of soul, for cultivating the virtue and practice of religion. 'Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath Day,' or day of rest; this is the purpose of the rest, that workers may have time and opportunity for caring for the religious affairs of the soul.

The strict Sunday obligation laid on Catholics by Holy Church is to hear Mass. But just to hear a Low Mass, a half-hour, and do no more, would be a sadly inadequate manner of passing the Sunday; it would not make it a holy day of religion and the service of God.

The Holy Mass truly is the highest and greatest act of divine worship; and he who devoutly, according to his power, hears the public Mass in his parish church, takes part in the act of social public worship of God that is His right and His due.

But it is not much; and the man or woman who wants to take religion seriously and earnestly, will not be satisfied habitually to do no more on the Sunday than hear a Low Mass, and then spend the whole day in recreation and amusements, however allowable and reasonable it may be to indulge in them when the call

of religion has been fulfilled. The Catholic Church has no use for the Puritan Sunday; but she does expect her children to keep the Sunday holy. Those who feel that the Sunday rest is ordained in the first place in order to give religion the chance of having its fair place in their lives, will ordinarily try to come to church again for evening service, of Vespers or Compline or Devotions, with hymns and sermon, and ending with Benediction: that is to say, those that are free to do so. And here they should be encouraged to comply with the strong urging of the Holy Father, set forth above (p. 179), to take active part in the service, joining in the singing of all such portions as may be, in any church, assigned to congregational singing, be it the hymns of Benediction, the Litany, or English hymns; also to join audibly in answering those parts said by the congregation, as Rosary and other English prayers: not murmuring or muttering in an undertone, but, as the Holy Father urges, using their voices, so that the service may be really the united voice of all the people together in public worship of God, and to their own great spiritual profit.

Another most beneficial practice for making the Sunday holy is to set aside a half-hour during the day for quiet spiritual reading or meditation. I knew a holy layman whose practice it was always after breakfast on the Sundays to read for half an hour th *Imitation of Christ*, slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfull

This exercise alone had a wonderful effect in spiritualising his life. There can be few who could not ordinarily on the Sundays cut out a half-hour to be spent thus alone with God and the soul. Better still would it be to take the New Testament—the Gospels were strongly urged on all by Pius X—or the Old: Catholics surely suffer a great spiritual loss in that they deprive themselves so generally of the grand religious teaching of the Great Prophets, and of the wisdom of Proverbs. The annotated *Layman's New Testament* of Fr. Hugh Pope, O.P. (Sheed & Ward), would be a great help. A handy full Doway Bible, good paper and print, has just been published by Burns, Oates and Washbourne, at very small cost.

There is the question of Retreats for spiritual exercises so strongly urged by our Holy Father Pius XI; and evidently the religious value of such retirements must be very great. Still, for the great majority of workers, whose holiday is only a fortnight in the summer and the public bank holidays, it would be too much to ask them to make set retreats. But perhaps such might be able to respond by a Sunday retreat now and then. Facilities are offered from Saturday night to Monday morning for such week-end retreats, public or private, in many religious houses.

It would be out of place to urge the advantages and benefits of approaching the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion. The zeal with which the

holy Pontiff Pius X pressed frequent Communion on all good Catholics is too well known to need enforcing. According to his teaching, renewed by his successors, it is certain that it would be lawful, right, good, for all leading, or trying to lead, a good Catholic Christian life, to approach Holy Communion weekly, the only conditions for worthy weekly, or even daily, Communion being a conscience free from mortal sin, and a right intention in going to Communion as a religious act.

It has to be recognised that, however desirable daily Mass, and even daily Communion, would be, for the vast majority of workers it is impracticable, and could not reasonably be urged in general. Those whose conditions of life and work, whose hours are such as have been described at the beginning of this chapter, could only in exceptional circumstances, as a seven o'clock Mass in a church close at hand, hear Mass before starting for work; nor after return from the day's work would any kind of set meditation be possible.

MORNING AND NIGHT PRAYERS

And so we come to the homely practice of morning and night prayers as the great staple of the religion of the good layman, the sheet-anchor of his spiritual life. It is easy to see why. God's friendship is our most precious possession. But experience tells us that in order to keep a friendship alive contact is necessary

either personal or at least by letter; without such contact a friendship usually fades away and dies for want of nourishment. It may be revived on renewed contact; but for the time it is dead, or nearly so. So will it be with our friendship of God; a cooling off, at least on our side, though not on His. Now it is above all by the morning and night prayers that the good busy layman, the one whom we have in view in this book, keeps in touch with God, establishing communication with Him twice daily, and thereby keeping alive and active his relation with the Great Friend and Father.

Hence the importance, hardly to be exaggerated, of keeping up through life the practice of our childhood, learned at our mother's knee, of regular good morning and night prayers.

Yet it is to be feared that only too many grow in time careless and irregular over their morning and night prayers, and at last come to neglect and omit them altogether, and thus pass their daily lives without prayer—a deplorable condition.

The reason of this is twofold. We are often hurried in the morning, and late and tired at night, and so get into the way of leaving out the prayers. Of this it can only be said that the habitual neglect of our prayers is sheer laziness, sloth, and religious obtuseness. We ought to make, and keep, the rule of saying always some suitable prayers morning and night, such as those of the *Simple Prayer-Book* of the

Catholic Truth Society. And if on any occasion we really cannot say these, then *at least* an 'Our Father,' 'Hail Mary,' and 'Glory,' on our knees before leaving our room in the morning or going to bed at night. This will take hardly more than a minute, and will for the nonce be just enough to put us into touch with God at the beginning and end of the day, and so keep alive our friendship with Him. But this should be an emergency measure; proper morning and night prayers should be the rule, and the practice.

But probably the great reason for the neglect of morning and night prayers is more subtle. It is the difficulty that besets all prayers, and is a temptation that has simply to be fought. We are, all of us, apt to be discouraged at our apparent failure in prayer. Instead of being the easy, delightful thing that converse with our Heavenly Father ought, so we would think, to be, our common experience is that it is a difficult, unsatisfying thing, full of distraction, dryness, want of devotion, physical discomfort, drowsiness—so heartless that we wonder if it be of any spiritual value, if we have been praying at all, if it be worth while. We complain that we do not feel any devotion—just as good people at Confession often are distressed that they do not feel any sorrow for their sins. Such good souls have to be told that 'feelings' are a matter of the emotions, and the emotions are related with the bodily side of ou

make-up, and cannot be called up at will. We have not got to *feel* sorry for our sins, but to *be* sorry for them; and the being sorry is matter, not of the emotional part of our nature, but of the soul's highest powers, the intellect and will. Similarly, we cannot *feel* devotion when we want to; we have got to *be* devout, and that is matter of intellect and will. We do not pray in order to feel devotion and spiritual joy —if such things do come to us, we welcome them, and thank God; but we pray to please God, not to please ourselves. We pray because it is His wish, His command, His law. Such state of aridity, distraction, desolation, is a well-known condition in prayer; and the thing is to work through it, to go on praying, trying to pray. Consequently, for nothing, for no sense of failure, should anyone give up the morning and night prayers; no matter what the distractions, the dryness and indevotion, everyone should perform as best he can the daily exercise of prayer morning and evening, fortifying himself in the conviction it is well worth while, by the assurance of all masters of the spiritual life, as of St. Francis of Sales, that 'an ounce of prayer of desolation is of greater worth than a pound of prayer of consolation.'

There is a simple test that we all, priests, religious, lay folk alike, may apply to our prayers, be it our vocal prayer of breviary, rosary, morning and night prayers, or be it mental prayer. When we rise from prayer dissatisfied and distressed, we may put to our-

selves the four straight questions: Did I *intend* t. pray? Did I *want* to pray? Did I *try* to pray? Am I sorry I did not pray better? And if we can answer these four questions with an honest 'Yes,' then we may well believe we have been praying, and probably praying very well.

St. Alphonso in a tractate on Prayer gives the assurance that if we pray we shall be saved, coupled with the warning that if we do not pray we run a great risk of being lost.